School Review Process Guide

The Center
FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT

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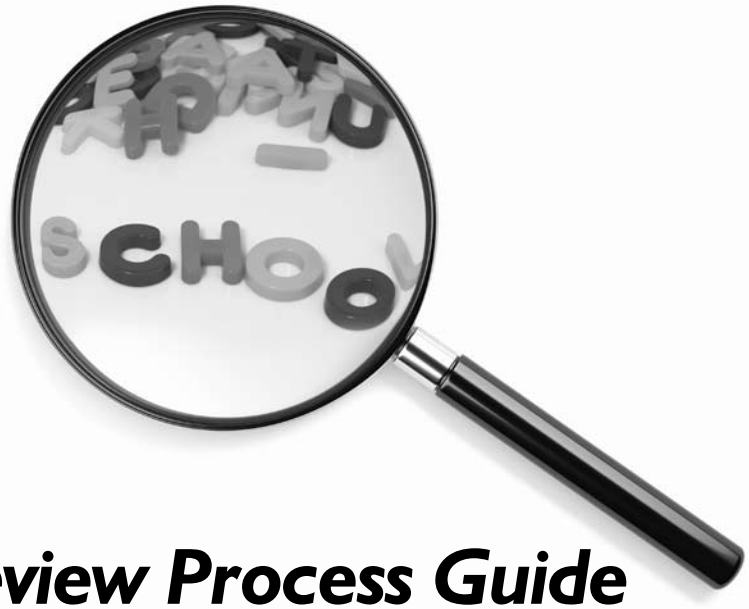
Introduction



School Review Process Guide

Introduction to the *School Review Process Guide*

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (CCSRI) created the *School Review Process Guide* to assist schools in planning and implementing a school improvement process focused on increasing student achievement. The *School Review Process Guide* provides school improvement team members with a flexible planning and implementation design that can be tailored to individual schools.

The use of relevant data is at the core of the school review process approach. Various forms of relevant data are gathered, including demographic data, student achievement data, community perception data, and data on the current program (e.g., curriculum, instructional strategies, school climate factors, etc.). Perception questionnaires are included to gather input from administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents.

The structure of the *School Review Process Guide* allows school improvement team members to customize the comprehensive review and implementation process to their *own* schools—they review school programs based on their own data and design a school improvement plan that is based on the individual needs of their own students and school communities. The guide includes suggestions and guidance for:

- Selecting and engaging a school improvement team
- Gathering relevant data
- Interpreting data
- Planning for the implementation of improvement strategies based on an analysis of the data

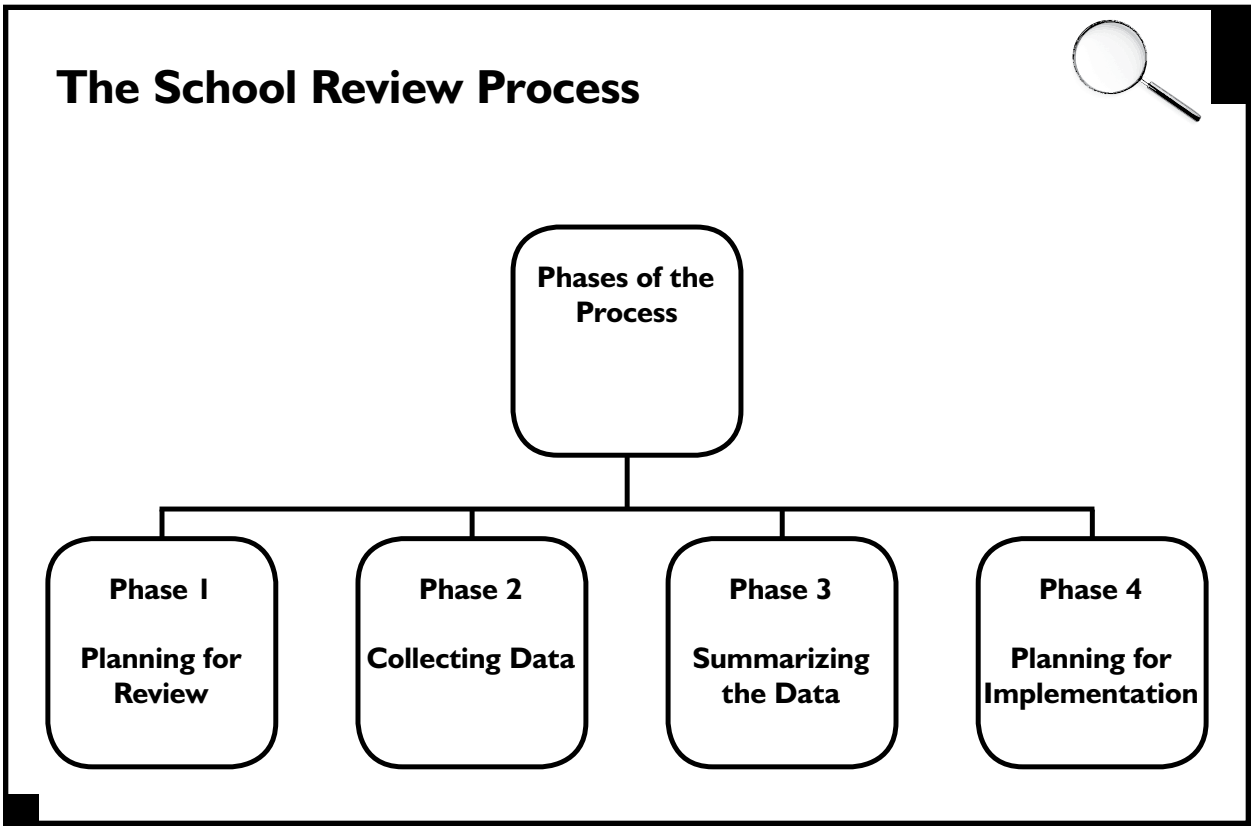
The guide includes procedures, research-based strategies, and implementation tools that can be used to support the school review and implementation process. These school review tools can be used regardless of

whether the school review process is conducted by a school improvement team or exclusively by central office personnel. Instruments and templates also may be used for a school review process that includes an outside consultant.

What Is the School Review Process?

The school review process begins by asking school improvement team members to evaluate their school's strengths and weaknesses. School improvement team members gather and analyze key data that they then use to develop and implement school improvement practices. These activities are organized into four phases. The phases are:

- **Phase 1—Planning for School Review**. The school review process begins with project planning—which includes selecting a school improvement team—defining or revisiting a vision and mission for the school, planning tasks and deadlines to review the current school program, involving staff and community members, and designing a plan for implementation.
- **Phase 2—Collecting Data**. The second part of the process involves gathering relevant data that can reveal strengths and areas for improvement in the school.
- **Phase 3—Summarizing the Data**. The third part of the process involves summarizing the data. These findings are reported in a form that can be interpreted readily by all school community members. The findings form the basis of an action or implementation plan.
- **Phase 4—Planning for Implementation**. The final step is the development of



an action or implementation plan developed by the school improvement team and approved by school and/or district personnel. School improvement requires the commitment of the entire school community in implementing the plan. The implementation plan includes a process for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

This guide helps school improvement teams collect and summarize school data that is used to develop an effective, workable school improvement plan. The guide stops at the development of the plan. It does not provide instruction on how to implement, monitor, or evaluate a school improvement plan. Flexibility is built into the guide so that school improvement teams can use it to meet their unique needs; however, use of the guide does not, in any way, guarantee that a school will meet adequate yearly progress goals.

Quality Indicators that Underlie the School Review Process

High-performing schools can be identified by certain characteristics or indicators. These indicators can be replicated in any school. Most schools have some of these indicators in place, but the highest achievement results are attained in schools where all of the indicators are present. The *School Review Process Guide* uses quality indicators of high-performing schools as its foundation. School improvement teams review their own programs and plan for school improvement using these quality indicators.

There are various ways to categorize the characteristics of high-performing schools. In the *School Review Process Guide*, the characteristics are classified into six quality indicators that contribute to increasing student academic performance. The indicators are as follows:

- Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum
- Effective Instruction
- Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data
- Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement
- Effective School Leadership
- Parental and Community Engagement

Each of the quality indicators include subindicators. A description of each indicator follows. [*Note*: An annotated bibliography for the indicators is included in Appendix One].

Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum

An aligned and rigorous curriculum challenges all students. Flexibility is built into the design that allows teachers to meet the needs of all students. Important components of a strong curriculum are:

- Curriculum is aligned with state standards and assessments in all subject areas.
- Curriculum is clearly articulated across all grade levels and subject areas, and at key transition points to close gaps and eliminate duplication.
- Curriculum provides flexibility to meet the needs of all students, including special education, gifted and talented, culturally and linguistically diverse, and economically disadvantaged students.
- A process is in place for monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing the curriculum.
- Textbooks and other materials are sufficient in all content areas for use in delivering curriculum.

Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction

Effective instruction includes diverse and varied classroom practices and teaching strategies for meeting the learning needs of all students, including struggling learners and students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Procedures and practices are in place for ensuring the highest quality teachers, including recruitment, retention, and ongoing professional development. In addition, effective instruction takes into account the use of time and resources in the classroom. Components of effective instructional practices include:

- Each classroom is staffed with a highly qualified teacher who is knowledgeable in the subject that he or she is teaching; possesses the knowledge and skills needed to challenge and motivate all students to high levels of learning; uses a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of special education, gifted and talented, culturally and linguistically diverse, and economically disadvantaged students; and maximizes instructional time in the classroom.
- Teachers are evaluated (both formally and informally) and provided with regular feedback.
- Teachers are provided with professional development that is relevant to their needs, based in classroom practice, and reinforced through ongoing support.
- Instruction is based on curriculum aligned to state standards and frequent benchmark assessments are used to monitor student performance.
- Activities and assignments (including homework) are engaging, relevant to the content, and reinforce or extend the objective of each lesson.
- Additional assistance is provided for low-performing students in the classroom and/or through out-of-classroom or after-school programs.

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data

Formative and summative data provide evidence of whether the curriculum is comprehensive and clear, and whether instruction is successful in attaining the required level of student performance. Analysis of assessment data is used to drive classroom instruction and direct school improvement efforts. Components include:

- Assessment of student learning is frequent and aligned with state standards and district curriculum.
- A comprehensive school-level accountability and data management system is in place.
- Student progress is reported frequently and regularly to students and parents.
- Teachers make instructional decisions based on student performance data.

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement

A positive school climate forms a community in which students feel safe. The climate is characterized by high expectations for academic achievement. A model of positive discipline is applied to all students. Components include:

- High expectations for academic achievement for all students are evident throughout the school environment.

- The school environment is driven by a clear plan for school safety and codes of conduct for staff and students.
- Discipline plans and procedures reflect equity and a respect for diversity in all areas.
- The physical environment is clean and orderly.
- Support is provided for students at key transition points—PK through kindergarten, elementary through middle school, and middle school through high school.

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

Strong instructional leadership focused on student achievement is essential for a positive, supportive, academically-driven school environment. Elements of effective instructional leadership include:

- A shared vision and mission are evident throughout the school.
- Decision making that is focused on the school vision and mission is shared with teachers, staff, and community.
- The principal ensures an equitable, respectful, and supportive environment that is focused on promoting high achievement expectations for all students.

Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement

Parent engagement in their child's schooling has been shown to have a positive effect on student achievement. Parent engagement can be direct participation in school activities and/or it can include parental support for academic achievement and school-related activities. Community participation in a school can provide the school with outside support—both in terms of community goodwill and resources. Important components include:

- Families are invited to participate in school activities and programs.
- Families are informed of opportunities that may help students who struggle in school.
- Families and community members are invited and encouraged to participate in school improvement efforts.
- School personnel actively seek out community participation in school activities and planning.

Moving Forward

The school review process is carried out in four distinct phases: planning for review, collecting data, summarizing the data, and planning for implementation. The final outcome of this process is a school improvement plan designed to build on identified strengths and address prioritized areas for improvement.

The following chapters are organized by each phase. Tools and resources are included.

Phase 1

Planning for School Review

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Phase 1

Planning for School Review

Phase 1: Planning for School Review

During the initial planning phase, school and district leaders bring together a school improvement team that will provide leadership for the review process. The team's charge: To become familiar with and carry out the school review process. The team is expected to develop a plan for the school review process, establish a schedule for meetings and completion of tasks, and assign responsibilities for tasks.

School improvement teams that conduct these types of reviews—hereafter referred to as the *team*—typically include a wide representation of stakeholders—school and district leadership, school staff and faculty, family and community representatives and, if desired, technical assistance providers. Expectations for each member's participation on the team are clearly defined.

Team leadership is a key component to ensuring that the process moves forward efficiently and effectively. Facilitative and collaborative approaches to leadership tend to work best in working through the review process.

Within Phase 1, there are several activities necessary for planning the school review process. Some of these tasks are completed by the school leadership personnel who initiated the school review process, while others are completed by the team. These include the following:

- Plan the review process. [School leadership personnel who initiated the school review process]
- Establish the school improvement team. [School leadership personnel and team]
- Get started. [Team]

The following sections provide detailed outlines for Phase 1 activities.

Planning the Review Process

This section provides an outline of steps to take when planning the review process. Use *Phase 1 Planning Sheet: Planning the Review Process* (see page 15) as a guide.

Step 1: Consider and Articulate the Purpose of the School Review

When the purpose of the school review has been carefully considered and articulated, it can be communicated more effectively to a school review team and to the school community as a whole. Answers to the following questions may help orient team members to the purpose:

- Who initiated the school review?
- Why was the school review initiated?
- What is the expected outcome?

Step 2: Name the Person Who Will Lead the Review Team

Although team members need to be involved in all aspects of planning and decision making, the most effective teams have a single leader who is responsible for maintaining the vision and the momentum for the school review process. The team leader must be empowered with the authority to make significant changes in the school program.

Step 3: Articulate the School Vision and the Mission

The vision and mission for a school provide a direction for school improvement. Institutions, like people, cannot move forward without a vision of where they are going. The vision and mission will direct every part of the school review process. A school's vision and mission statements should reflect or align with those of the district.

If vision and mission statements have been established for the school and are part of the institutional knowledge of the school community (staff, students, and parents), write them down. Firmly institutionalized visions and missions are ones that all stakeholders can name and describe.

For example, in a staff meeting, ask participants to write the mission and vision for the school. You might do this again in a parent committee meeting or PTA meeting. If many of the staff and parents are not clear about the mission and vision, then revisit the statements. Typically, mission and vision statements should be revisited every three or four years because of staff turnover or shifts in the school population.

Note: If vision and mission statements for the school have not been established, or the established vision and/or mission are not part of the school community's established knowledge, skip this section. Return to it after the team has been established and members have had an opportunity to develop and/or review these statements.

Step 4: Establish the Team

Determine which stakeholders of the school community will be represented. You might do this in collaboration with the initiator of the school review process, trusted advisors, or an outside consultant. Generally, representation should include the district office, the school administration, the teaching staff, the support staff, parents, students at the secondary level, and—in some cases—community members who are not parents in the school (e.g., business leaders or others who have a stake in the success of the school). School improvement takes place within the context of district cooperation and support. Thus, consider

including a district office representative on the team who can provide information and guidance on district policies and procedures as well as access to resources. Also, include specialists on the team who can provide input on specific areas of focus. For instance, a review focusing on literacy might include a reading specialist, and a review focused on improvement of achievement for special education students might include a special education teacher or coordinator. Establish a directory that includes the name of each member, stakeholder group represented, and contact information.

Step 5: Articulate Expectations, Responsibilities, and Resources for the Team

Articulate expectations and responsibilities for the team members in advance of the first meeting. Prepare a concise and clear description of expectations and responsibilities. Use answers to the following questions to aid you in this task:

- What are the overall goals for the school review process (e.g., school improvement, total school reform, restructuring due to corrective action, or proposal for schoolwide project reform under Title I)?
- What is the deadline for accomplishing the goals?
- When is the information from the school review process needed?
- To whom is the school review process accountable?
- How often will meetings be held?
- What tasks will team members be expected to complete between meetings?
- Should there be an agreement among team members regarding discretion or confidentiality on the process?

Also, identify resources that will be provided to the team. Use answers to the following questions to aid you in this task:

- What resources are available to support the school review process (e.g., outside consultant, teacher release time, extra pay for extra time, district support)?
- What resources are not immediately available but will need to be obtained?

Step 6: Contact and Invite Team Members

Make sure that team members agree to serve willingly. Should any potential members choose not to participate, make sure that they are replaced with other individuals who represent their particular stakeholder groups. Provide potential

Elements of a Successful Team

- Effective leadership of the review process
- Commitment of team members to the review process
- Clear and shared vision of the review process
- Commitment to transparent, open, and honest communication with the entire school and community
- Access to adequate resources—including time, meeting space, human resources, and access to information and data

participants with an understanding of the task and time commitment.

Step 7: Schedule the First Team Meeting

Make sure that the meeting is scheduled at a convenient time and in a convenient location for team members. Allow ample time before the first meeting for members to clear their calendars. Allow two to three hours for the first meeting.

Prepare an agenda. Distribute the agenda in advance of the meeting. Send a meeting reminder with the agenda.

Establishing the Team

This section outlines how to convene the team. Use *Phase 1 Planning Sheet: Establishing the School Review Team* (see page 18) as a guide.

Step 1: Convene the First Meeting

Share the work you have done in articulating the purpose and vision with the review team. This will set the stage for the process by ensuring that members understand why the group has been convened, the goals for the group, the deadline, and the available resources. Articulate the level of commitment required for participation on the team.

Select group leadership. Determine leadership for the following tasks:

- Who will keep the records of the meetings?
- Who will maintain the paperwork, templates, and data collected and compiled by the team?
- Who will arrange for things such as meeting places and refreshments, if needed?
- Who will handle any funds needed for the team?

Set up book keeping procedures. These may include systems related to maintaining records, setting meeting dates, or tracking activities or resources.

Set group norms. Whenever a group comes together to achieve a purpose, taking time to set group norms is beneficial. Group norms are the rules by which the group will function; they provide answers to questions such as:

- What are the shared beliefs of all group members?
- How will these shared beliefs drive the group's process?
- How will decisions be made (e.g., majority, consensus)?
- How will disagreements be resolved (e.g., the leader have the final say)?
- How will meetings be conducted (e.g., formally or informally)?
- How will all group members' voices be heard (e.g., round table discussion, small task forces)?
- How will the leadership and responsibilities be shared?

Step 2: Review Mission and Vision Development

The school vision and mission statements drive the school review process and the implementation of the school improvement plan. A vision is a clear statement of the shared values of the school community. A mission statement is typically a more elaborate description of the general purpose and goals for the school. Goals and objectives for the school improvement process are derived from the vision and mission statements.

Examples of Strong Vision and Mission Statements

Example #1

Vision: We believe school should reflect a caring community; a safe and fair environment in which the school staff, with the support of parents, guide the children toward respecting others, understanding the varied cultures of our society, and striving for academic and behavioral excellence.

Mission: All our students, including those with special needs, will be prepared for a rapidly changing technological world and be able to access information, solve problems, think critically, make decisions, and cooperate and work productively with others.

Example #2

Vision: Our school believes that each of us is gifted with a unique potential that defines a destiny. A commitment to character development enables us to achieve personal excellence and find fulfillment in life. We strive for a school where the members of our community will be judged not by their inherent talents or native abilities but by the content of their character.

Mission: The mission of our school is the development of the mind, character, and physical well-being of our students through the creation of an environment fostering academic excellence, maturity, responsibility, and mutual respect.

[*Note*: Others can be found on school websites.]

Provide copies of the current school vision and mission statements to the team. If your school has a well-known, well-incorporated vision and mission, discuss the ways in which the vision and mission will drive the school review process**.** [*Note*: If the vision and mission need to be developed or revisited, set the date for the next meeting to do this.]

Step 3: Determine Team Procedures for Engaging in the School Review Process

During Step 3, the team decides what procedures to use to complete the school review process. The tasks are as follows:

- Set meeting dates.
- Assign members of the team to tasks they will perform or oversee.
- Set specific timelines for tasks and deadlines for completion.
- Agree on a process for keeping all members of the school community informed of the team's work.
- Agree on a process for obtaining regular feedback from school community members.

Getting Started

This section outlines how team members begin the school review process.

Step 1: Share Knowledge

The school review process begins by engaging team members in thinking about school improvement. The goal is twofold: to have team members discuss different perspectives about their school's strengths and areas for improvement;

and to orient team members to the six quality indicators of the school review process.

It is essential that team members familiarize themselves with the six quality indicators:

- Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum
- Effective Instruction
- Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data
- Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement
- Effective School Leadership
- Parental and Community Engagement

These indicators anchor the school review process. Once team members have a working understanding of the indicators, they can begin to discuss strengths and areas for improvement for each. Use the chart on page 20 to compile strengths and areas for improving student achievement. Present each team member with the *School Review Process Guide* so they can familiarize themselves with the contents and goals of this process. The team may decided to use all or part of the guide, depending on the school's priorities, needs, and data findings.

Optional Tool: The following activity and tool can be used to help focus the discussion around strengths and areas for improvement. A quiz is found on page 21. This quiz is based on the six quality indicators and is designed to help participants look at their school's strengths and areas for improvement. Ask team members to complete the quiz. As an option, the quiz also can be distributed to teachers, support staff, parents, and administrators—in which case, the review team compiles the results and includes those results when charting responses.

Step 2: Determine the Process Tasks

Process tasks help the team organize its work. The team determines the schedule for each of the following tasks:

- Gathering data
- Summarizing and interpreting the data
- Developing an implementation plan

In addition to the completion date or deadline, other actions may be requested (e.g., assignment of a person to serve as supervisor for the task). A tool for organizing this information is found on page 23.

Step 3: Move Forward in the School Review Process

At this point, the team has completed Phase 1: Planning for School Review. The team has been convened, duties have been assigned, preliminary timelines have been set, and the vision and mission for the school have been clearly established. In addition, the team has developed a working knowledge of the indicators that underlie the school review process.

The team is now ready to move forward to Phase 2: Data Collection. During the data collection phase, school improvement team members identify, collect, disaggregate, and record data that will be analyzed during subsequent phases of the review process. The analysis of data will lead to prioritized areas for improvement efforts.

Planning Sheet: Planning the Review Process

Step 1: Answer the Following Questions

1) Who initiated the school review?

2) Why was the school review initiated?

3) What is the expected outcome?

Step 2: Identify the Group Leader(s)

1) Leader:

2) Leader:

Step 3: Articulate the School Vision and Mission Statements (attach or write here)

continued

Planning Sheet: Planning the Review Process *(continued)*

Step 4: Establish the School Review Team

Stakeholder	Name of representative(s)	Contact information

Step 5: Articulate Expectations and Resources for the School Review Team

1) What are the overall goals for the school review process (e.g., school improvement, total school reform, restructuring due to corrective action, proposal for schoolwide project reform under Title I) ?

2) What is the deadline for accomplishing the goals?

continued

Planning Sheet: Planning the Review Process *(continued)*

3) When is the information from the school review process needed?

4) What resources are available to support the school review process (e.g., outside consultant, teacher release time, extra pay for extra time, district support)?

5) What resources will need to be obtained?

Step 6: Contact Potential Team Members

- ❒ Confirm contact information.
- ❒ Identify substitute members as needed, and make contact.
- ❒ Send confirmation letters to members.

Step 7: Schedule First Meeting

- ❒ Schedule at a time and location that is convenient to all members [Date: _____; Time: _____].
- ❒ Confirm participation and send reminders.
- ❒ Prepare an agenda for the meeting and include it in any e-mailed or mailed reminders.

Planning Sheet: Establishing the School Review Team

Step 1: Convene the First Meeting

❒ **Provide an orientation to the review.**

- Articulate the purpose and vision of the school review process.
- Share the goals, the deadlines, and the resources.
- Describe the level of commitment required for participation on the team.

❒ **Select group leadership.**

- Who will keep the records of the meetings?
- Who will maintain the paperwork, templates, and data collected and compiled by the team?
- If needed, who will arrange for things such as meeting places and refreshments? Who will handle any funds needed for the team?

❒ **Set up book keeping procedures.**

- Maintaining records.
- Setting meeting dates.
- Tracking activities or resources.

❒ **Establish group norms.**

- What are the shared beliefs of all group members?
- How will these shared beliefs drive the group's process?
- How will decisions be made (e.g., majority, consensus)?
- How will disagreements be resolved (e.g., the leader has the final say)?
- How will meetings be conducted (e.g., formally, informally)?
- How will all group members' voices be heard (e.g., round table discussion, small task forces)?
- How will the leadership and responsibilities be shared?

continued

Planning Sheet: Establishing the School Review Team *(continued)*

Step 2: Review Mission and Vision Statements

If your school has a well-known, well-incorporated vision and mission, discuss the ways in which the vision and mission will drive the school review process**. (**If the vision and mission need to be developed or revisited, set the date for the next meeting to do this. Date: _____)

- ❒ Provide copies of the current school vision statement and school mission statement to the team.
- ❒ Share examples of other schools' mission and vision statements.

Step 3: Review Team Procedures for Engaging in the School Review Process

Decide what procedures to use to complete the school review process.

- ❒ Set meeting dates.
- ❒ Assign members of the team to tasks they will perform or oversee.
- ❒ Set specific timelines for tasks and deadlines for completion.
- ❒ Determine a process for keeping all members of the school community informed of the team's work.
- ❒ Determine a process for obtaining regular feedback from school community members.

Strengths and Areas for Improving Student Achievement

What are the strengths of our school? (Focus on student achievement.)	What do we want to improve? (Focus on student achievement.)

School Improvement Quiz

School Improvement		Yes	No	Notes
1)	Is the curriculum for all grade levels and subjects aligned with state standards in areas where state standards exist?			
2)	Are there gaps between the curriculum and state standards?			
3)	Do you understand the scope and sequence of the curriculum?			
4)	Has the curriculum been aligned across grade levels to avoid duplication?			
5)	Does the curriculum provide a clear transition from grade to grade or subject to subject?			
6)	Are teachers provided with time to co-plan units/ lessons with grade- or subject-level colleagues?			
7)	Is the curriculum in your school research-based?			
8)	Does a team evaluate the curriculum regularly (e.g., every two years)?			
9)	Does this team include teachers who use the curriculum?			
10)	Are instructional/curricular resources sufficient to provide effective instruction?			
11)	Are all teachers in your school highly qualified?			
12)	Do all teachers in your building use a variety of instructional strategies to address the needs of individual students?			
13)	Do all teachers follow the curriculum?			
14)	Are benchmark assessments based on the standards given to students at least four times a year?			
15)	Do teachers have access to the benchmark assessment data?			
16)	Does the school work to reduce noninstructional activities and interruptions?			
17)	Are classroom and schoolwide activities focused on academics?			

continued

School Improvement Quiz *(continued)*

School Improvement	Yes	No	Notes
18) Do teachers provide instructional support for English language learners?			
19) Do teachers provide instructional support for special needs students?			
20) Does the school provide additional instruction for low-performing students?			
21) Does the school have and use a data management system?			
22) Is student performance reported regularly to parents?			
23) Do teachers use classroom and benchmark data to make instructional decisions?			
24) Has the school set high expectations for student achievement?			
25) Do staff and students know and have access to a clear school safety plan?			
26) Is there a clear and fair student code of conduct?			
27) In your opinion, is the climate of the school safe and orderly?			
28) In your opinion, is the climate of the school equitable and fair for all students?			
29) Do you know the vision and mission of the school?			
30) Do the leaders promote the vision and mission?			
31) Is all staff included in decision making?			
32) In your opinion, does the principal assure a supportive environment for students and staff?			
33) Are parents actively involved in the school program?			
34) Are there structures in place to encourage parent participation in the school program?			

Schedule for Process Tasks

When does the school review process need to be completed? [*Tip*: Work backward from that date.]

Data gathering:

To be supervised by _____

To be completed by (date) _____

Present plan to the whole school (date) _____

Data summary and interpretation:

To be supervised by _____

Meeting for initial analysis (date) _____

Present data to whole school (date) _____

Meeting for follow-up analysis (date) _____

Meeting to begin developing implementation plan:

To be supervised by _____

To be completed by (date) _____

"Check-in" with team (date) _____

Phase 2

Collecting Data

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Phase 2

Collecting Data

Data form the foundation of the school review process. In Phase 1, the school improvement team identified a number of strengths and areas that need to improve in the school and compiled them in a chart. Based on those initial ideas, in Phase 2 team members:

- Identify types of data they need and the approaches they will use to gather the data
- Gather the data
- Record the data

Types of Data

The *School Review Process Guide* encourages teams to identify data that reflect the six quality indicators. Data should be gathered with the emphasis on what is most relevant to the school in aiming to meet the six quality indicators.

Tools are provided in this section of the *School Review Process Guide* for collecting and recording the following four types of data:

- **Student demographic data**. These include the subgroups for which the school must disaggregate achievement data (e.g., students with disabilities, socioeconomic status, and racial and ethnic groups). Also include information on attendance, tardiness, and graduation rate (where appropriate), and any other student-level data that may be relevant or useful.
- **Student achievement data**. These include standardized test scores from the annual district testing and classroom-level benchmark/formative assessment data collected and reported by subgroup.
- **Program data**. This is a broad category that includes information on all aspects of the school program. School reviewers (improvement teams, district personnel, or outside consultants) should collect data that are most relevant to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Not all program data are needed. Examples of program data include the following:
  - **Curriculum/instructional program:** Grade-level or subject-level curriculum, curriculum maps, pacing guides, standards alignment

documents for grade or subject level, and evaluation for specific programs.

- **Instructional program:** Teacher/ classroom observations, professional development documentation, special instructional programs, programs for differentiated instruction or special education service models, and/or transition programs.
- **School climate:** Student codes of conduct; student handbooks; discipline records; special, noninstructional programs (such as advisory groups, drug and alcohol awareness programs); and/ or parent involvement programs.
- **Staffing data:** Teacher qualification, expertise, and/or demographics, support staff, and use of time and resources for staffing.

- **Perception data**. These data provide information on how the school community perceives the school. You can use questionnaires to gather perception data from teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and students.

Some data will come from state and/or district information systems. Additional data may originate from school or classroom sources.

The data collection framework is illustrated in the figure on page 29. The visual representation shows how to view the data and how the data interrelate. Demographic data are information on the students. Program data include information on the program(s) that are provided for or "applied to" the students—the process of education. Student achievement data are the outcome of the process. Perception data provide insight into how the process of education is viewed by stakeholders. Although student achievement is the most important data to consider, perception data also are used to provide feedback to improve the school program.

Data Collection Framework

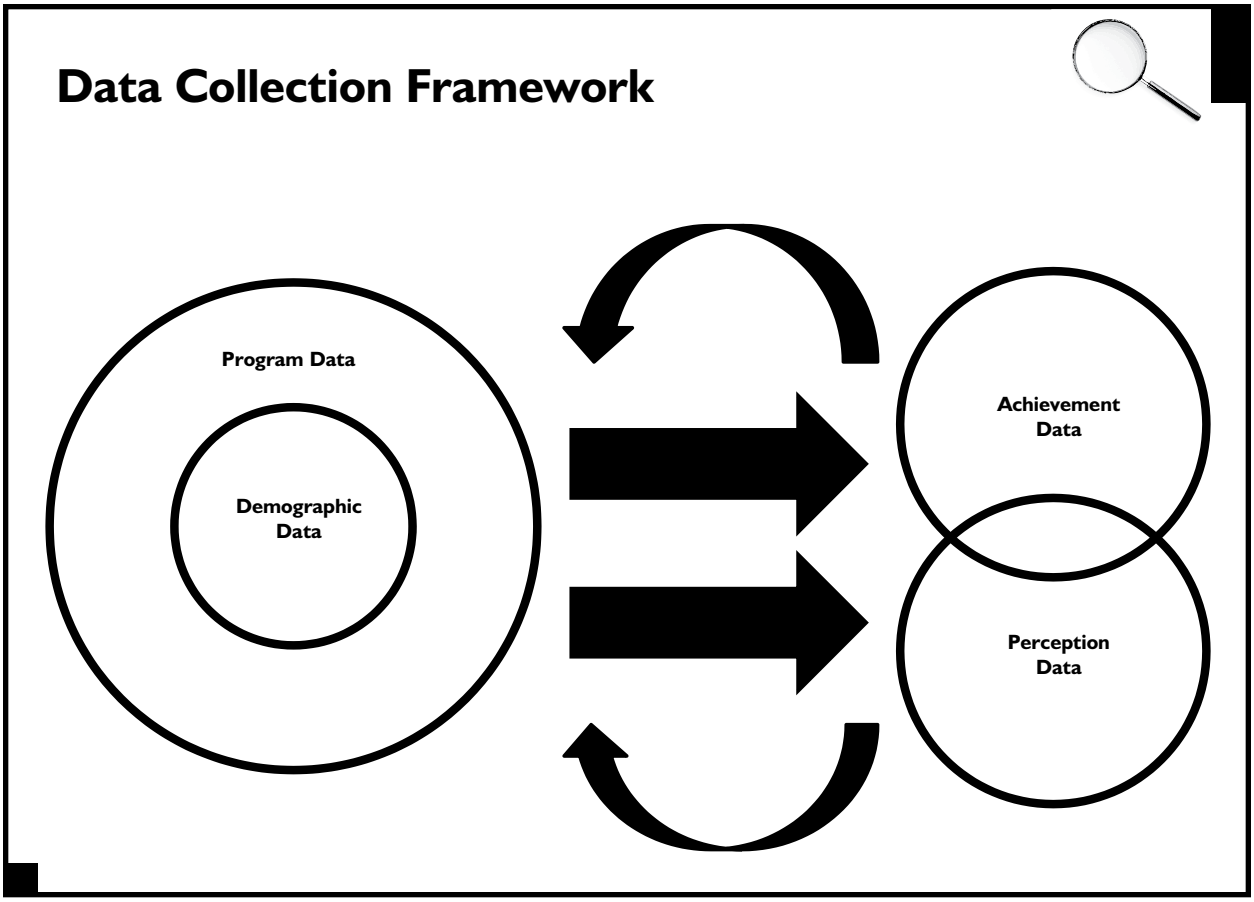
Team Task: Identifying Data

The more data team members gather, the more accurately they will be able to explore and reflect on students, the school program, and the perceptions of the school community. On the other hand, for data to be useful, they must be relevant. Teams can become bogged down with data that may not contribute to understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of your school.

In deciding what and how much data to collect, it helps to base decisions on the vision and mission of the school. Consider these examples:

- If the vision and mission of the school is to develop an environment where children of different ethnic or racial groups experience equity and high academic achievement, then the team may want to disaggregate and highlight data for subgroups.
- If the school has a large population of poor children, the school improvement team may want to highlight the data for these students.
- If the school community perceives that the academic program lacks rigor, then paying special attention to the data on curriculum and instruction will be important.
- If the school is concerned that discipline problems are affecting the school climate or academic environment, then data on discipline—including records and codes of conduct—might be important to emphasize.

Schedule a meeting to discuss the kinds of data to be gathered. At that meeting, plan on determining which data are most relevant in order to avoid



collecting too much data. Assign the following responsibilities:

- Who will be responsible for gathering each type of data?
- What is the schedule for gathering the data?
- Who is responsible for recording the data?

Schedule follow-up meetings as needed to ensure that the data collection and recording process stays on track.

Team Task: Gathering and Recording Data

Tools are provided for collecting and recording the four types of data discussed earlier—demographic, achievement, program, and perceptions. Data collection tools and matrixes are found at the end of this section.

[*Note*: The *School Review Process Guide* uses a spreadsheet for collecting and summarizing student achievement data. Program data and perception data are each their own category, with their own instruments for analysis. The quality indicators pertain primarily to the program data, although some use of data (Quality Indicator #3, Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data) is associated with the act of collecting student achievement data. Also, Quality Indicator #5, Effective School Leadership, is assessed through the use of perception data.]

Student Demographic Data

Student demographic data are used to develop more fully the picture of your school and the needs of your students. Student demographic data include information on number and percentage of students in each of the racial/ethnic subgroups defined by *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), students

from low-income families, students with special needs, and English language learners. Use the table on page 32 to compile student demographic data.

Student Achievement Data by Subgroup

Collecting, summarizing, and using student achievement data to drive the school's instructional program is important to meeting Quality Indicator #3, Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data. It is important to have a data management system in place.

The team decides the type of data to be collected, including:

- Data for *all* students
- Data that have been disaggregated by subgroups that have been identified in the research as requiring differentiated instructional strategies (students from low-income families, English language learners, special education students, and students from minority or non-dominant racial or ethnic groups)
- Data that have been disaggregated by teachers, grade level, and/or program service enrollment

Classroom instruction is one of the most important contributors to student achievement. It may be beneficial to ask teachers to examine and reflect on the student data for their classrooms and to be prepared to bring their thoughts and reflections to a faculty meeting.

Student achievement data include test scores—both annual standardized or criterion-referenced tests and benchmark formative assessments. Because NCLB requires the reporting of annual standardized test data by subgroup, collect both standardized assessment data and benchmark data by subgroup. The spreadsheet provided with this guide offers a format for doing this. Consider including other subjects such as social studies and science and/or other formative assessments used in your school.

Note: The data gathered for the school review process should be consistent and standard across grade levels and subject areas. Although authentic assessments—such as portfolios and performance assessment—often provide teachers with valuable insights related to student classroom performance, they do not provide a means for objectively measuring how the school is performing and therefore are not recommended as part of this review process.

Student Achievement Data Matrix. The Excel spreadsheet provided with this guide is a suggested template for collecting student achievement data. It can be customized to fit the needs of your school and is designed so that you may expand or contract the rows and columns depending on your particular needs.

The spreadsheets available online [for elementary schools at **http://www.centerforcsri.org/tools/datamatrix-es.xls** and for secondary schools at **http://www.centerforcsri.org/tools/datamatrix-ss.xls**] for the *School Review Process Guide* are designed to provide a method for collecting and presenting data on annual and benchmark student tests. They are provided for data disaggregation at the teacher/classroom/subject levels and for demographic subgroups.

Program Data

Program data comprise a broad category that includes information on all aspects of the school program. Program data typically address four of the six quality indicators:

- Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum
- Effective Instructional Practices
- Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement
- Parental and Community Engagement

Program data can be collected after student achievement data have been summarized and areas of need identified.

The team decides which program data are important to gather for your school. Focus on collecting data that are most relevant to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of your school. Keep in mind that not all program data are relevant or useful to the school review process.

One way to determine relevant program data is to look at the chart the team created to identify areas of strengths and areas in need of improvement. If the team identified a high number of students as referred for discipline, suspended, or expelled, one focus of the school review process might be school climate. The team might gather the discipline referral records, suspension/expulsion records, and perception questionnaires. The team also might want to examine the current student code of conduct, the discipline matrix, and any discipline programs in place.

If the team identified low academic achievement for the special education subgroup as an area of improvement, members may want to gather specific information on special education curricula and programs. They also might want to consider specific subgroups (e.g., fully included, pull-out, and self-contained students) to determine if any of these subgroups are influencing test scores. The team also might look at special education service delivery models.

Several tools are included to help facilitate the collection and analysis of program data. These are:

- ***Collecting Data for Each Quality Indicator***. Program data are organized by quality indicator, and with guidance on which data might be collected to answer questions relevant to each of the quality indicators. Use this tool (see page 33) to help generate your own questions and decide which program data you will need to answer them. For each question, think about how your school is addressing the question and where you will find the data to support the answer.
- ***Quantitative Matrix for Reviewing School Climate***. Use this tool to collect information related to school climate (see page 37).
- ***Classroom Observation Guide***. Observation of instruction is essential for the school review process. The *Classroom Observation Protocol* (see page 38) provides a research-based list of teacher behaviors that have been shown to contribute positively to student learning. The guide facilitates observation, and can be used by teachers to observe each other. It is not intended as an evaluation tool, but as a guide for helping the team address the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Perception Data

Perception data ask for the opinions of the school community. Quality schools conduct regular surveys of parent, student, and staff perceptions and use these data to review the school program.

The *School Review Process Guide* provides research-based questionnaires for all members of the school community:

- Building administrators (see page 40)
- Teachers (see page 45)
- Support staff (see page 51)
- Parents (in English, see page 55, in Spanish, see page 59)
- Students (in English, see page 63, in Spanish, see page 66)

Although perceptions of a school program can sometimes vary sharply from the more concrete data, a cross-section of perceptions from all members of the community will frequently point to strengths and weaknesses in a school program that may not be evident from the other data.

The questionnaires in this guide can be given to administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and students to elicit their perceptions.

Compile Student Demographic Data

Subgroup	Number	Percent of Total Enrollment
African American		
Hispanic		
Asian/Pacific Islander		
White		
American Indian/Alaskan Native		
Other		
Economically Disadvantaged		
English Language Learner		
Special Education		
Male		
Female		

Collecting Data for Each Quality Indicator

Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum

Questions	Yes/No	If no, what data need to be collected?
Are all curricula aligned with state standards and assessments?		State standards, curriculum guides for all grade level and subject areas, pacing guides
Are all curricula articulated across grade levels and subject areas?		Curriculum maps, other planning documents
Is flexibility built into all curricula that allows for differentiation?		Curriculum maps and/or guides

Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction

Questions	Yes/No	If no, what data need to be collected?
Are all teachers qualified to teach the content to which they are assigned?		Certification records
Is there a plan to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers?		Central office hiring procedures
Are teachers evaluated at least yearly?		Teacher evaluation schedules
Is professional development aligned to the curriculum and to assessment?		Professional development calendar, student achievement data
Is professional development based on teacher needs and imbedded in practice?		Professional development evaluations
Does professional development address the needs of subgroups: special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and gifted students?		Professional development evaluation, subgroup student achievement data
Do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies?		Teacher observations

continued

Collecting Data for Each Quality Indicator *(continued)*

Does classroom instruction address the needs of all students (special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and gifted)?		Teacher observations, teacher perception questionnaire
Is allotted instructional time maximized in the classroom?		Teacher observations, teacher perception questionnaire
Are schoolwide distractions and interruptions to instruction held to a minimum?		School schedules
Are teachers held accountable for written daily lesson plans?		Lesson plans, pacing guides
Are instructional activities engaging and relevant to the content?		Classroom activities and teacher observations
Do teachers articulate high expectations for all students' achievement?		Teacher observations
Does the school provide support for struggling learners?		Classroom instructional assistants, afterschool programs/extended learning opportunities, pull-out programs, tutoring, co-teaching

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

Questions	**Yes/No**	**If no, what data need to be collected?**
Are student assessments administered frequently (at least quarterly)?		Formative/benchmark assessment schedule
Are student formative assessments aligned to the state standards?		Formative/benchmark assessments, state standards
Is there a comprehensive accountability data management system?		
Is student performance reported regularly to parents (at least quarterly)?		Report card schedules
Are students kept abreast of their classroom performance, grades, and assessment at least weekly?		Teacher grading records, teacher-student conference logs
Do teachers use student performance data to make instructional decisions?		Long-range instructional plans Lesson plans

continued

Collecting Data for Each Quality Indicator *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement

Questions	Yes/No	If no, what data need to be collected?
Are programs/plans in place to assist with critical transitions (PK to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school)?		Transition plans, orientation programs, counseling department records, inter-school meeting agendas
Is there a written school safety plan that includes daily procedures for safety and a crisis management plan?		Student handbook, parent handbook, staff handbook
Are all school community members provided with a written copy of and trained on the school safety plan?		Training records
Have the school safety plans been updated in the last three years?		
Is there a written student code of conduct that includes: • Rules and expectations? • Progressive and positive discipline for infractions? • Procedures for fair and equitable treatment of diverse groups?		Written code of conduct
Are high expectations for positive behavior consistent for all students?		Discipline referral, logs, suspensions, expulsions
Do discipline records reflect proportional representation of all students?		Discipline records, posted expectations
Do hallways and classrooms reflect an atmosphere conducive to learning—clean, orderly, and inviting?		
Is there evidence of school spirit and pride among students and staff?		Activities calendar, awards assemblies, other noninstructional activities, perception questionnaires
Are the mission and vision statements posted?		

continued

Collecting Data for Each Quality Indicator *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

Questions	Yes/No	If no, what data need to be collected?
Are the vision and mission statements known by students, staff, and parents?		Surveys
Are all stakeholders represented in the school improvement planning process?		Agenda and committee rosters
Is decision making shared among the staff?		Meeting agendas, schedule of meetings, committees, evidence of teacher leadership
Is there a system for sharing information with all members of the school community?		Letters, e-mails, brochures, telephone system, homework lines, newsletters, websites, parent-teacher organizations

Quality Indicator #6 - Parental and Community Engagement

Questions	Yes/No	If no, what data need to be collected?
Are families informed about school activities and invited to participate in school activities?		Information system, records of parent meetings and program participation, sign in sheets, evaluations
Are families informed of extra support for struggling students (e.g., tutoring, afterschool programs, etc.)?		Parent communication records, guidance counseling office records
Are families and community members invited to participate in the school improvement process?		Agendas and committee records

Quantitative Matrix for Evaluating School Climate

Subgroups	Attendance	Discipline Referrals	Suspensions	Expulsions
Total				
African American				
Hispanic				
Asian/Pacific Islander				
White				
American Indian/ Alaskan Native				
Special Education				
Economically Disadvantaged				
English Language Learners				
Male				
Female				
Grade _____				
Grade _____				
Grade _____				
Grade _____				
Grade _____				
Grade _____				

Classroom Observation Protocol

School Name_____

Observer Name _____**Date**_____

Grade Level_____ **Subject/Special Classroom** _____

Start Time _____ **End Time** _____ **Number of Students Present** _____

Please rate what you see according to: 3 = fully, 2 = partially, 1 = not at all, 0 = not observable

	3	2	1	0	Comments
The lesson objective is posted and articulated throughout the lesson.					
The content of the lesson is consistent with the curriculum.					
The teacher knows the content of the lesson.					
The lesson engages students through discussion, guided practice, movement, group work, technology and/or manipulatives.					
The teacher utilizes graphic representations, explanations, models, questions, and/or dramatizations.					
The teacher incorporates higher-order thinking questions and activities (e.g., inferential, critical, application, evaluative).					
A variety of instructional tools are available and accessible for students (e.g., dictionaries, graphic organizers, maps).					
All of the allotted time is used for instruction.					
Activities transition smoothly and timely from one to the next.					
The lesson is well planned and considers the needs of all students.					
The academic progress of all students is recognized and/or displayed on charts and bulletin boards (e.g., work samples).					
Posted student work samples reflect current learning objectives.					

continued

Classroom Observation Protocol *(continued)*

Please rate what you see according to: 3 = fully, 2 = partially, 1 = not at all, 0 = not observable

	3	2	1	0	Comments
There are a variety and type of student work samples that reflect the diversity of students.					
The teacher monitors student progress during the lesson through proximity, every pupil response, exit slips, and/or journals.					
There is evidence of recognition for academic achievement (e.g., awards assemblies, positive feedback).					
Lesson activities are differentiated to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of all students, including: special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and English language learners.					
The teacher articulates high expectations for all students.					
The teacher calls on many different students by name.					
Teacher provides students with specific feedback to improve learning.					
The teacher is professional in attire and shows respect to all students.					
The teacher, co-teacher, and/or instructional assistant actively instruct and support student learning.					

Administrator Perception Questionnaire

Our school is participating in a school review process, which is designed to help our school develop a school improvement plan. As part of the school review process, we are gathering information from parents, teachers, administrators, students, and support staff on their perceptions of the school.

We are inviting your participation by asking you to complete this questionnaire. When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope provided and bring it to the main office of the school. The questionnaire requires no identifying information and your participation is voluntary.

Directions:

This questionnaire asks about your perceptions of your school. Please check one of the four boxes for each statement according to the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Please attempt to answer all questions on the questionnaire. If you do not have an answer to a question, please check the box entitled "Don't Know."

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Don't Know**
Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum					
1) This school has high-quality curricula that challenge students.					
2) This school's curricula are aligned with our state's standards and grade-level expectations.					
3) This school's curricula are planned across grades to promote continuity.					
Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction					
4) When this school starts a new instructional program, monitoring and evaluation occur to see how the program is impacting student achievement.					

continued

Administrator Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
5) Teachers in this school have high expectations for all students.					
6) Teachers in this school are committed to improving student achievement.					
7) Teachers in this school have the skills to enable all children to learn.					
8) Teachers in this school have the knowledge and skills to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.					
9) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for struggling learners.					
10) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities.					
11) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for English language learners.					
12) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for culturally diverse students.					
13) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for gifted and high-performing students.					
14) Teachers in this school follow the school curriculum.					
15) This school provides additional supports for students who are not successful with classroom instruction.					
16) General education and special education teachers in this school collaborate.					

continued

Administrator Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
17) There is a clear relationship between instruction and assessment at this school.					
18) A variety of assessment strategies is used to measure student progress in this school.					
19) Students in this school are given opportunities to self-assess.					

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

20) Teachers in this school collect data to inform their instruction.					
21) Teachers in this school use data to inform their instruction.					
22) This school is engaged in the systematic analysis of student performance data.					
23) This school reports assessment results to parents.					

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement

24) Learning and education are valued by students in this school.					
25) Staff members feel responsible to help each other do their best.					
26) Students have a positive feeling about this school.					
27) When disciplining students, teachers focus on the behavior.					
28) Teachers' classroom management expectations are consistent.					

continued

Administrator Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
29) Teachers' classroom management plans provide clear expectations and appropriate consequences.					
30) Teachers in this school promote positive interactions among students.					
31) Teachers in this school value the input of students from various cultures and subgroups in their classroom instruction.					
32) Various cultures and subgroups are valued members of the school community.					
33) Students feel a responsibility to promote the collective success of all students.					
34) This school has a clear vision that is focused on student learning.					
35) Students are aware of the learning expectations of this school.					

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

36) This school is implementing a plan for school improvement.					
37) Teachers in this school are provided clear expectations for meeting academic achievement goals.					
38) Teachers in this school are encouraged to try new methods of instruction.					
39) Teachers in this school have time to work together in collaborative teams.					
40) Teachers in this school are encouraged to take on leadership roles in the school.					

continued

Administrator Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
41) Teachers in this school receive useful, job-embedded professional development.					
42) Teachers in this school receive ongoing informal evaluation and feedback on their instruction.					
43) The school administrators visit classrooms to monitor implementation of the instructional program.					

Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement

44) There is a positive relationship between the school and the community.					
45) All parents have an opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.					
46) Teachers in this school reach out to parents for input on their children's learning.					
47) Teachers in this school are aware of issues and concerns of the community in which the school is located.					
48) This school supports parents in helping their children succeed academically.					
49) Parents play an active role in making decisions about the school's programs.					
50) Attendance at PTA meetings, parent nights, and extracurricular activities is strong in this school.					
51) Parents are involved in examining data on this school's progress.					
52) Teachers in this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important to the success of our school.

Teacher Perception Questionnaire

Our school is participating in a school review process, which is designed to help our school develop a school improvement plan. As part of the school review process, we are gathering information from parents, teachers, administrators, students, and support staff on their perceptions of the school.

We are inviting your participation by asking you to complete this questionnaire. When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope provided and deliver it to the main office of the school. The questionnaire requires no identifying information and your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty.

Directions:

This questionnaire asks about your perception of your school. Please check one of the four boxes for each statement according to the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Please attempt to answer all questions on the questionnaire. If you do not have an answer to a question, please check the box entitled "Don't Know."

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Don't Know**
Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum					
1) This school has a high-quality curriculum that challenges students.					
2) This school's curriculum is aligned with our state's standards and grade-level expectations.					
3) This school's curriculum is planned across grades to promote continuity.					
Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction					
4) When this school starts a new instructional program, monitoring or and evaluation occur to see how the program is impacting student achievement.					

continued

Teacher Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
5) Teachers in this school have high expectations for all students.					
6) Teachers in this school are committed to improving student achievement.					
7) Teachers in this school have the skills to enable all children to learn.					
8) Teachers in this school have the skills and knowledge to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.					
9) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for struggling learners.					
10) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for students with disabilities.					
11) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for English language learners.					
12) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for gifted and high achieving students.					
13) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for culturally diverse students.					
14) Teachers in this school follow the school curriculum.					
15) This school provides additional supports for students who are not successful with classroom instruction.					
16) General education and special education teachers in this school collaborate.					

continued

Teacher Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
17) There is a clear relationship between instruction and assessment at this school.					
18) A variety of assessment strategies is used to measure student progress in this school.					
19) Students in this school are given opportunities to self-assess.					

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

20) Teachers in this school collect data to inform their instruction.					
21) Teachers in this school use data to inform their instruction.					
22) The school is engaged in the systematic analysis of student performance data.					
23) This school reports assessment results to parents.					

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement

24) Learning and education are valued by students in this school.					
25) Staff members feel responsible to help each other do their best.					
26) Students have a positive feeling about the school.					
27) When disciplining students, teachers focus on the behavior.					
28) Teachers' classroom management practices are consistent.					

continued

Teacher Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
29) Teachers' classroom management plans provide clear expectations and appropriate consequences					
30) Teachers in this school promote positive interactions among students.					
31) Various cultures and subgroups are valued members of the school community.					
32) Students feel a responsibility to promote the collective success of all students.					

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

33) This school has a clear vision that is focused on student learning.					
34) Students are aware of the learning expectations of this school.					
35) This school is implementing a plan for school improvement.					
36) The school administrators make expectations clear to teachers for meeting academic achievement goals.					
37) The school administrators are knowledgeable about the state standards and curriculum.					
38) The school administrators encourage teachers to try new methods of instruction.					
39) The school administrators praise and recognize teachers.					
40) The school administrators ensure that teachers have time to work together in collaborative teams.					

continued

Teacher Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
41) The school administrators encourage teachers to take leadership roles in the school.					
42) The school administrators ensure that teachers receive adequate professional development to improve instruction.					
43) The school administrators ensure that teachers receive ongoing informal evaluation and feedback on their instruction.					
44) The school administrators visit classrooms to monitor implementation of the instructional programs.					

Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement

45) The school administrators promote a positive relationship between the school and the community.					
46) The school administrators give all parents the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.					
47) Teachers in this school reach out to parents.					
48) Teachers in this school are aware of issues and concerns of the community in which the school is located.					
49) The school supports parents in helping their children succeed academically.					
50) Parents play an active role in making decisions about the school's programs.					
51) Attendance at PTA meetings, parents' nights, and extracurricular activities is strong.					

continued

Teacher Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
52) Parents are involved in examining data on this school's progress.					
53) Teachers in this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important to the success of our school.

Support Staff Perception Questionnaire

(Support staff includes office staff, building services staff, guidance staff, social workers, school psychologists, transportation staff, food services staff, instructional assistants, and any other nonteaching or nonadministrative staff.)

Our school is participating in a school review process, which is designed to help our school develop a school improvement plan. As part of the school review process, we are gathering information from parents, teachers, administrators, students, and support staff on their perceptions of the school.

We are inviting your participation by asking you to complete this questionnaire. When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope provided and leave it in the main office of the school. The questionnaire requires no identifying information and your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty.

Directions:

This questionnaire asks questions about your perceptions of your school. Please check one of the four boxes for each statement according to the extent to which you agree or disagree

Please attempt to answer all questions on the questionnaire. If you do not have an answer to any of the questions, please select the box entitled "Don't Know."

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Don't Know**
Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum					
1) This school has a high-quality curriculum that challenges students.					
Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction					
2) Teachers in this school have high expectations for all students.					
3) Teachers in this school are committed to improving student achievement.					

continued

Support Staff Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
4) Teachers in this school have the skills to differentiate instruction for culturally diverse students.					
5) Teachers follow the school curriculum.					
6) This school provides additional supports for students who are not successful with classroom instruction.					
7) General education and special education teachers in this school collaborate.					
8) Students in this school are given opportunities to self-assess.					

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

9) This school is engaged in the systematic analysis of student performance data.					
10) This school reports assessment results to parents.					

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement

11) Learning and education are valued by students in this school.					
12) Staff members feel responsible to help each other do their best.					
13) Students have a positive feeling about their school.					
14) When disciplining students teachers focus on the behavior.					
15) Teachers' classroom management expectations are consistent.					

continued

Support Staff Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
16) Teachers' classroom management features clear expectations and appropriate consequences.					
17) Teachers in this school promote positive interactions among students.					
18) Staff and students from different cultures and subgroups are valued members of the school community.					
19) Students feel a responsibility to promote the collective success of all students.					

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

20) This school has a clear vision that is focused on student learning.					
21) Students are aware of the learning expectations of this school.					
22) This school is implementing a plan for school improvement.					
23) The school administrators praise and recognize teachers and staff.					
24) The school administrators ensure that teachers have time to work together in collaborative teams.					
25) The school administrators encourage teachers to take leadership roles in the school.					
26) The school administrators visit classrooms to monitor implementation of the instructional program.					

continued

Support Staff Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement					
27) The school administrators promote a positive relationship between the school and the community.					
28) The school administrators give parents the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.					
29) Teachers in this school make an effort to reach out to parents.					
30) Teachers in this school are aware of issues and concerns of the community in which the school is located.					
31) The school supports parents in helping their children succeed academically.					
32) Parents play an active role in making decisions about the school's programs.					
33) Attendance at PTA/PTO meetings, parents' nights, and extracurricular activities is strong.					
34) Parents are involved in examining data on this school's progress.					
35) Teachers in this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important to the success of our school.

Parent Perception Questionnaire

Our school is participating in a school review process, which is designed to help our school develop a school improvement plan. As part of the school review process, we are gathering information from parents, teachers, administrators, students, and support staff on their perceptions of the school.

We are inviting your participation by asking you to complete this questionnaire. When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope included. You or your child may deliver it to the main office of the school. The questionnaire requires no identifying information and your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty.

Directions:

This questionnaire asks about your perceptions of your child's school. Please check one of the four boxes for each statement according to the extent to which you agree or disagree.

Please attempt to answer all questions on the questionnaire. If you do not have an answer to any of the questions, please select the box entitled "Don't Know."

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum					
1) I have seen a copy of the state standards either on paper or on the Internet.					
2) I am provided information about the curriculum that my child is being taught.					
Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction					
3) I receive regular communication from school personnel.					
4) I know the objectives that my child will be learning.					
5) My child receives extra support from his or her teacher if needed.					

continued

Parent Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6) My child's teacher expects him or her to be a high-achieving student.					
7) My child's teacher is prepared to work with students with disabilities.					
8) My child's teacher is prepared to work with students who struggle to learn.					
9) My child's teacher is prepared to work with students who are learning English.					
10) My child's teacher is prepared to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.					
11) My child views school as a place where learning is a priority.					

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

12) I receive progress reports about my child's' performance.					
13) My child is aware of his or her academic progress.					
14) My child is involved in monitoring his or her progress.					
15) I receive reports about benchmark assessments in a timely manner.					
16) I receive reports about standardized tests in a timely manner.					

continued

Parent Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement					
17) My child's school is safe.					
18) I am aware of the student code of conduct.					
19) My child is motivated to attend school.					
20) I can telephone or e-mail teachers if I have questions.					
21) My child has opportunities to be involved in extracurricular activities at school.					
Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership					
22) There are opportunities for me to meet with the school principal.					
23) I am aware of the vision and mission statements for my child's school.					
24) Student achievement is the main goal of the teachers, staff, and leadership at my child's school.					
25) I can telephone or e-mail the principal whenever I need to.					
26) My child's school helps students transition from one level to the next (i.e., kindergarten to elementary, elementary to middle, or middle to high).					

continued

Parent Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement					
27) Parents are invited to give input on the school improvement plan.					
28) School personnel and families communicate and interact throughout the school year.					
29) Parents have a voice in their children's education at this school.					
30) My child's school provides ways for me to stay involved without being present at the school.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important to the success of our school.

Cuestionario para los padres acerca de su percepción de la escuela

En esta escuela se está llevando a cabo un proceso de revisión que ha sido diseñado para ayudarnos a elaborar un plan con el fin de mejorarla. Como parte del proceso de revisión de la escuela estamos recolectando información concerniente a la forma en que los padres, maestros, alumnos, administradores y el personal de apoyo perciben la escuela.

Los invitamos a que participen contestando el cuestionario que se ha adosado. Cuando lo hayan contestado, métanlo en el sobre que les hemos proporcionado y tengan la bondad de sellarlo. Ustedes o su hijo(a) pueden entregarlo en la oficina principal de la escuela. No tienen que identificarse en el cuestionario y la participación es voluntaria. No hay castigo alguno para quienes prefieran no participar.

Instrucciones:

En este cuestionario se les pregunta acerca de cómo perciben ustedes la escuela. Para cada renglón, marquen uno de los cuatro cuadros que le siguen conforme hasta qué punto ustedes están de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con cada afirmación.

Les agradeceríamos que tratasen de contestar todas las preguntas del cuestionario. Si no tienen una opinión acerca de algún punto, marquen el cuadro debajo de donde dice: "No lo sé".

Escuela: _____ Fecha: _____

Indique hasta qué punto está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	**En gran desacuerdo**	**En desacuerdo**	**De acuerdo**	**En gran acuerdo**	**No sé**
Indicador #1 de calidad: Programa de estudios integrado y riguroso					
1) He visto una copia impresa o por Internet de las normas estatales.					
2) Me han suministrado información acerca del programa de estudios de mi hijo(a).					
3) Recibo comunicación con regularidad por parte del personal escolar.					
4) Sé cuáles son los objetivos de lo que mi hijo(a) está aprendiendo.					

continúa

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los padres

Indique hasta qué punto está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
Indicador #2 de calidad: Prácticas eficaces de instrucción					
5) Cuando lo necesita, mi hijo(a) recibe respaldo adicional por parte de su maestro(a).					
6) El maestro o la maestra de mi hijo(a) tiene altas expectativas para él/ella.					
7) El maestro o la maestra de mi hijo(a) está capacitado(a) para trabajar con alumnos discapacitados.					
8) El maestro o la maestra de mi hijo(a) está capacitado(a) para trabajar con alumnos que, para aprender, tienen que luchar.					
9) El maestro o la maestra de mi hijo(a) está capacitado(a) para trabajar con alumnos que están aprendiendo inglés.					
10) El maestro o la maestra de mi hijo(a) está capacitado(a) para trabajar con alumnos procedentes de diversos ambientes culturales.					
11) Mi hijo(a) percibe la escuela como un lugar donde lo más importante es aprender.					
Indicador #3 de calidad: Evaluación formativa y evaluación del alumno o de la alumna					
12) Recibo informes acerca del progreso de mi hijo(a) en su desempeño escolar.					

continúa

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los padres

Indique hasta qué punto está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
13) Mi hijo(a) está enterado(a) de su progreso escolar.					
14) Mi hijo(a) está involucrado(a) en el seguimiento de su progreso.					
15) Recibo con regularidad informes sobre las pruebas de evaluación que marcan puntos de referencia.					
16) Recibo con regularidad informes sobre las pruebas estandarizadas.					

Indicador #4 de calidad: Cultura escolar positiva enfocada en logros

17) La escuela a la que asiste mi hijo(a) es un lugar seguro.					
18) Estoy familiarizado(a) con el código de conducta para los alumnos.					
19) Mi hijo(a) se siente motivado(a) para asistir a la escuela.					
20) Puedo llamar o enviarle un mensaje electrónico a los maestros si tengo alguna pregunta.					
21) Mi hijo(a) tiene oportunidad de participar en actividades fuera de la clase.					

Indicador #5 de Calidad: Liderazgo escolar eficaz

22) Tengo oportunidad de conocer al director o a la directora de la escuela.					

continúa

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los padres

Indique hasta qué punto está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
23) Conozco lo que la escuela tiene previsto para el futuro y la declaración de sus objetivos.					
24) El éxito de los alumnos es la meta principal tanto de los maestros como del personal y de los líderes de la escuela a la cual asiste mi hijo(a).					
25) Puedo llamar o enviarle un mensaje electrónico al director o a la directora de la escuela cuando es necesario.					
26) La escuela a la que asiste mi hijo(a) tiene un programa que facilita la transición de un nivel al otro. (Ej. Del kindergarten a la escuela elemental; de la escuela elemental a la escuela intermedia y de la escuela intermedia a high school.					

Indicador #6 de Calidad: El compromiso de los padres y de la comunidad

27) A los padres se les invita a presentar sus aportes para el plan de mejoramiento escolar.					
28) El personal escolar y las familias se comunican e interactúan durante el año escolar.					
29) Los padres pueden expresar su opinión en cuanto a la enseñanza que recibe mi hijo(a)					
30) La escuela a la que asiste mi hijo(a) facilita el que yo pueda involucrarme sin que yo esté presente en la escuela.					

Les agradecemos que hayan tomado el tiempo de llenar este cuestionario. Sus aportes son de gran importancia para que alcancemos el éxito en esta escuela.

Student Perception Questionnaire

Our school is gathering information to help us target areas for improvement. We are gathering information from parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students on how they feel about our school. We would like your opinion if you would like to share it with us. You do not have to take this questionnaire. If you do, please do not put your name on it because the information is confidential. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty.

When you have finished the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope and return it to the main office of the school.

School Name: _____ Date: _____

City/State: _____

Please check the box that best describes how you feel about your 3rd period class for each statement.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. About the Curriculum					
1) This class is preparing me for the state test.					
2. About Instruction					
2) In this class each day, my teacher explains what we will learn.					
3) There is a connection between what we are tested on in class and what we learn in our class.					
4) My teacher provides daily feedback on my work either in class or on graded assignments.					

continued

Student Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
5) This class is interesting.					
6) My teacher connects what we are currently learning in class to what we have already covered.					
7) There are people in my school that I can go to for help if I don't understand something in my class.					
8) My teacher explains things in a lot of different ways to help students better understand.					
9) In general, my teacher returns graded assignments either in-class or online within three days of their due dates.					
10) In my class, I am given enough time to understand new concepts or material.					
11) I keep track of my course grade throughout the grading period.					
12) The comments and grades I receive on my in-class work, homework assignments, quizzes and tests help me understand where I need to improve.					
13) My teacher helps me to succeed in this class.					

4: About My School

14) I know how I am supposed to behave.					
15) I feel safe in school.					

continued

Student Perception Questionnaire *(continued)*

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
16) Expectations for student behavior were taught to me.					
17) All students in my school are disciplined fairly by the staff.					
18) I can participate in extracurricular activities if I want to.					

5: About the Administrators

19) I see the principal regularly around the school.					
20) The principal cares about my learning.					
21) Other than my teachers, there is at least one adult in this school who knows me by name.					

6: About My Parents and Community

22) My parents attend school activities and events.					
23) My parents know how I am doing in school.					
24) I feel comfortable having my parents come to my school for activities.					
25) My parents encourage me to complete my homework.					
26) My school is an important part of my community.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important to the success of our school.

Cuestionario acerca de la percepción de los alumnos

Del sexto al duodécimo grado (6-12)

Para identificar qué aspectos de esta escuela mejorar, les estamos pidiendo a los padres, maestros, administradores, al personal de apoyo y a los alumnos que nos informen cómo se sienten en relación a esta escuela. Te agradeceríamos nos dieras tu opinión si lo deseas. No es obligatorio contestar este cuestionario. Si lo llenas, no escribas en él tu nombre porque la información es confidencial. No hay castigo alguno si decidieses no contestar el cuestionario.

Cuando hayas contestado el cuestionario, mételo en el sobre, séllalo y entrégalo en la oficina principal de la escuela.

Nombre de la escuela: _____ Fecha: _____

Ciudad/ Estado: _____

Para cada una de las afirmaciones a continuación, marca el cuadro que mejor describa cómo te sientes en la tercera hora de clase.

Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	**En gran desacuerdo**	**En desacuerdo**	**De acuerdo**	**En gran acuerdo**	**No sé**
1. Acerca del programa de estudios					
1) En esta clase me están preparando para la prueba estatal.					
2. Concerniente a la instrucción					
2) En esta clase el maestro/la maestra explica diariamente lo que vamos a aprender					

continued

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los alumnos

Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
3) Hay relación entre las pruebas que nos dan y lo que aprendemos en el salón de clase.					
4) Diariamente, el maestro/la maestra me deja saber su reacción al trabajo que hago en el aula o en mis tareas escolares.					
5) Esta clase es interesante.					
6) El maestro/La maestra relaciona lo que estamos aprendiendo actualmente en el salón de clase con lo que ya habíamos cubierto.					
7) Hay gente en esta escuela a quienes puedo acudir para pedir ayuda si no he entendido algo en la clase.					
8) El maestro/La maestra explica las cosas de muchas formas para que los alumnos puedan entender bien.					
9) Por lo general, el maestro/la maestra nos devuelve las tareas en el salón de clase o nos las envía en línea en un plazo de tres días a partir de la fecha de entrega.					
10) En el salón de clase me dan tiempo suficiente para entender los nuevos conceptos o el nuevo material de estudio.					
11) Llevo cuenta de las calificaciones que saco en los cursos durante los semestres escolares.					

continued

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los alumnos

Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
12) Los comentarios que me hacen sobre mi trabajo de clase, las tareas, las pruebas, los exámenes y las calificaciones que recibo me ayudan a entender qué necesito mejorar.					
13) El maestro/La maestra me ayuda a tener éxito en esta clase.					

4. Ambiente

14) Sé cómo debo de comportarme.					
15) Me siento seguro(a) en la escuela.					
16) Me enseñaron lo que se espera de los alumnos en cuanto a la forma de comportarse.					
17) La forma de disciplinar a todos los alumnos de esta escuela es justa.					
18) Si lo deseo, puedo participar en actividades extraescolares.					

5. Acerca de los administradores

19) Veo con regularidad al director/ la directora por la escuela.					
20) El director/La directora tiene interés en que yo aprenda.					
21) Además de mis maestros, hay al menos un adulto en la escuela que sabe mi nombre.					

continued

Continuación de la Cuestionario para los alumnos

Indica hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las afirmaciones siguientes.	En gran desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De acuerdo	En gran acuerdo	No sé
6. Acerca de mis padres y de la comunidad					
22) Mis padres asisten a las actividades y a las funciones que se celebran en la escuela.					
23) Mis padres saben qué tal me va en la escuela.					
24) Me siento bien al ver que mis padres vienen a las actividades escolares.					
25) Mis padres me animan a que termine mis tareas escolares.					
26) En mi comunidad, la escuela forma parte importante.					

Les agradecemos que hayan tomado el tiempo de llenar este cuestionario. Sus aportes son de gran importancia para que alcancemos el éxito en esta escuela.

Phase 3

Summarizing the Data

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Phase 3

Summarizing the Data

During the data summary and interpretation phase of the review, the team—and representatives from the district, school, and community—analyzes data, discusses findings, identifies priority needs, and prepares for the action planning process. The *School Review Process Guide* includes tools for graphically representing the data and developing narrative summaries. Through the summary and interpretation of the data, areas of strength are identified and areas for improvement are prioritized. Areas identified for improvement are scrutinized to determine contributing factors and possible causes.

During Phase 3, the team organizes, summarizes, and begins to make sense of the data that have been collected. Placing data into the forms provided in the guide helps you to see patterns of need. Sometimes these patterns will confirm earlier assumptions, and sometimes they may signal areas that were unanticipated. The forms are intended to provide a straightforward way of organizing and looking at the data so that the team can:

- Share the findings with the entire school community.
- Identify patterns of needs.
- Begin to formulate goals and objectives for the school improvement plan.

Phase 2 included a chart for entering student demographic data. Refer to that chart when organizing the student achievement, program, and perception data. Phase 3 includes the following forms for organizing achievement and program data:

- Student achievement data spreadsheet for entering and viewing student achievement—both summative and formative—by subgroup. The spreadsheet is in electronic format so that you can add or subtract rows and columns to meet your needs. Formulas for calculating averages have been embedded in the spreadsheet.
- A program data matrix for entering and evaluating program data. Program data can be both quantitative and qualitative, so the matrix is organized around the quality indicators and provides a space to list the data that have

been acquired, the key findings from the data, and notes.

- A summative analysis form for the classroom observation protocols.

Student Achievement Data Spreadsheet

Two spreadsheets are included: one for elementary school that is designed for grade-level and self-contained classrooms, and one for secondary school is designed for subject and grade-level classrooms. Middle schools may use either or both.

The spreadsheet for entering and summarizing student achievement data is available in electronic format for elementary schools at **http://www.centerforcsri.org/tools/datamatrix-es.xls** and for secondary schools at **http://www.centerforcsri.org/tools/datamatrix-ss.xls**. This spreadsheet can be downloaded and modified to meet the particular needs of each school. For instance, the elementary school spreadsheet is formatted for kindergarten through grade six, but rows can be added or deleted for K-5 or K-8 schools. Space has been left to imbed formulas for average scores for each grade level, subject area, and subgroup.

Each row of the spreadsheet is coded for an individual teacher. Student learning is most affected in the classroom. Although strong leadership and a positive school climate also contribute to student achievement, it may be more accurate to say that weak leadership and a negative school climate can detract from student learning, because the strongest indicators for student achievement are best practices in instruction and faithful adherence to a standards-based curriculum. The *School Review Process Guide* provides a way of summarizing teacher-level data in order to fully reveal where the strengths and weaknesses in a school may lie and provide valuable information for implementing a school improvement plan that serves the needs of students and teachers.

Annual standardized test data (summative assessment) form the basis of most school student achievement profiles. These data can be examined by subgroup. The examination of these data typically is a required part of the adequate yearly progress determination process. Also, consider collecting and summarizing regular formative assessment data. For example, administer student pre-assessments at the beginning of the school year and benchmark assessments as often as every four to six weeks, or as infrequently as once or twice a semester. The formative assessment data can be used to track student progress throughout the year. When using formative assessment data, plan to disaggregate them by subgroup. Further examination of the data by teacher, grade level, or subject area also can provide a deeper understanding of improvements that may be needed.

Program Data Matrix

The Program Data Matrix (see page 76) provides a grid for entering data/evidence acquired and key findings next to each of the quality indicators. For data/evidence acquired, a summary of what was collected can be entered next to the appropriate quality indicator. Organizing program data according to Quality Indicator helps team members analyze the school's strengths and weaknesses. Note any quality indicators that lack data and determine if more data are needed.

In some cases, summative data/evidence statements may be entered next to more than one quality indicator. For example: Next to Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum, you might enter a data statement such as "English, math, and science are fully aligned. Social studies curriculum alignment is in process by district." A key finding here might be "Testing is English/reading and math only, so curriculum weakness is in articulation across grade levels for science and social studies." These statements need only provide enough information for the team to be able to share findings thoroughly with the greater school community.

[*Note*: Information for Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction, will come, in part, from the classroom observations. Information for Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement, includes quantitative averages from discipline, suspension, expulsion, and absentee records and perception data, as well as qualitative indicators such as notes on a "school tour" to access order, cleanliness, and bulletin boards.]

Classroom Observation Protocol Analysis Matrix

The Classroom Observation Protocol is intended to be used for random observation of classrooms as the school improvement team deems appropriate. It is not intended to be used for evaluative purposes. Classroom observation produces usable data when conducted in a safe and nonthreatening environment. Classroom observation might be done by teacher peers or by central office personnel who have no supervisory or evaluative power relating to the observed teacher.

The Classroom Protocol Summary Matrix (see page 86) provides a way of plotting and graphing observation data. When all the classroom observations have been returned, the team analyzes the data by:

- Adding the points for each observation item
- Dividing it by the number of returned observation protocols
- Plotting the average score on the line

The dots can be connected to show overall strengths and weaknesses in classroom instruction.

Perception Data—Questionnaire Summaries

Analyze the perception questionnaires for all five stakeholders. Use a blank questionnaire for each of the stakeholder groups to tally the number of responses in each category (strongly agree, agree. disagree, strongly disagree, don't know). Once you have a total number for each category and each question, you can combine total numbers for each question. You also can combine totals for each quality indicator for each stakeholder group.

You also might choose to combine all stakeholders' totals to get an aggregated frequency for each quality indicator. Whatever way you choose to view the results of these perception questionnaires, keep in mind that you are looking to see how the stakeholder perceives the school in terms of the quality indicators.

Remember, these questionnaires represent the perceptions of the school program by the school community. They are not "empirical" findings in that they are not indisputable fact. Rather, they provide insight into how the community may or may not be in agreement on the needs of the school.

Moving Forward

Once you have entered all data into the forms, plan to present the findings to the entire school community. The school community (teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, and other community members) may notice or prioritize data areas differently than the team, but their inclusion in the process is critical to a plan that can be implemented fully.

Program Data Matrix

Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
All curricula are aligned with state standards and assessments.			
All curricula are articulated across grade levels and subject areas.			
Flexibility that allows for differentiation is built into the curricula.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
All teachers are qualified to teach the content to which they are assigned.			
A plan is in place to recruit and retain highly-qualified teachers.			
Teachers are evaluated at least yearly.			
Professional development is aligned to the curriculum and assessment.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Professional development is based on teacher needs and imbedded in practice.			
Professional development addresses the needs of subgroups: special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and gifted students.			
Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies.			
Classroom instruction addresses the needs of all students (special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and gifted).			
Instructional time is maximized in the classroom.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Schoolwide distractions and interruptions to instruction are held to a minimum.			
Teachers are held accountable for written daily lesson plans.			
Instructional activities are engaging and relevant to the content.			
Teachers articulate high expectations for all students' achievement.			
The school provides special programs and supports to struggling learners.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Student assessments are administered frequently (at least quarterly).			
Student formative assessments are aligned to the state standards.			
There is a comprehensive data management accountability system.			
Student performance is reported regularly to parents (at least quarterly).			

continued

Program Data Matrix ***(continued)***

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Students are kept abreast of their classroom performance, grades, and assessment at least weekly.			
Teachers use student performance data to make instructional decisions.			

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Climate Focused on Achievement

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Programs/plans are in place to assist with critical transitions (PK to Kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school).			
There is a written school safety plan that includes daily procedures for safety and a crisis management plan.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
All school community members are provided with a written copy of and trained on the school safety plan.			
The school safety plans have been updated in the last three years.			
There is a written student code of conduct that includes: • Rules and expectations • Progressive and positive discipline for infractions • Procedures for fair and equitable treatment of diverse groups			
High expectations for positive behavior are consistent for all students.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Discipline records reflect "proportional" representation of all students.			
Hallways and class-rooms reflect an atmosphere conducive to learning (e.g., clean, orderly, and inviting).			
There is evidence of school spirit and pride among students and staff.			
The mission and vision statements are posted.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
The vision and mission statements are known by students, staff, and parents.			
All stakeholders are represented in the school improvement planning process.			
Decision making is shared among the staff.			
There is a system for sharing information with all members of the school community.			

continued

Program Data Matrix *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement

	Data/Evidence	Key Findings	Notes
Families are informed about school activities and invited to participate in them.			
Families are informed of extra support for struggling students (tutoring, afterschool programs, etc.).			
Families and community members are invited to participate in the school improvement process.			

Classroom Observation Protocol Summary Matrix

Total the score for each item from *all* teacher observations, then divide the total by the number of teachers who were observed. This will give you an average between 0 and 3 for each item. Place a dot on the line to represent the average for each question.

For example, for the first item, if five teachers were rated with scores of 3, 2, 2, 3, and 1, the total would be eleven. Divided by the number of teachers (5), the average would be 2.2. The dot would be placed on the line just to the left of the 2.

When you have completed the calculation and plotting for each of the items, you can "connect the dots" and you will have a graphical representation of teacher performance.

For each quality indicator, add the averages for each item and divide by the number of items in each quality indicator category to arrive at an average score for that quality indicator.

Please rate what you see according to: 3 = fully, 2 = partially, 1 = not at all, 0 = not observable

Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum

[Average = _____]

The lesson objective is posted and articulated throughout the lesson.	3 2 1 0
The content of the lesson is consistent with the curriculum.	3 2 1 0
The teacher knows the content of the lesson.	3 2 1 0

Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction

[Average = _____]

The lesson engages students through discussion, guided practice, movement, group work, technology, and/or manipulatives.	3 2 1 0
The teacher utilizes graphic representations, explanations, models, questions, and/or dramatizations.	3 2 1 0
The teacher incorporates higher-order thinking questions and activities (e.g., inferential, critical, application, evaluative).	3 2 1 0
A variety of instructional tools are available and accessible for students (e.g., dictionaries, graphic organizers, maps).	3 2 1 0
All of the allotted time is used for instruction.	3 2 1 0
Activities transition smoothly and timely from one to the next.	3 2 1 0
The lesson is well planned and considers the needs of all students.	3 2 1 0

continued

Classroom Observation Protocol Summary Matrix *(continued)*

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessments and Student Assessment Data

[Average = _____]

The academic progress of all students is recognized and/or displayed on charts and bulletin boards (e.g., work samples).	3 2 1 0
Posted student work samples reflect current learning objectives.	3 2 1 0
There are a variety and type of student work samples that reflect the diversity of students.	3 2 1 0
The teacher monitors student progress during the lesson through proximity, every pupil response, exit slips, and/or journals.	3 2 1 0

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement

[Average = _____]

There is evidence of recognition for academic achievement (e.g., awards assemblies, positive feedback).	3 2 1 0
Lesson activities are differentiated to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of all students, including: special education, culturally and linguistically diverse, economically disadvantaged, and English language learners.	3 2 1 0
The teacher articulates high expectations for all students.	3 2 1 0
The teacher calls on many different students by name.	3 2 1 0
Teacher provides students with specific feedback to improve learning.	3 2 1 0
The teacher is professional in attire and shows respect to all students.	3 2 1 0
The teacher, co-teacher, and/or instructional assistant actively instruct and support student learning.	3 2 1 0

Phase 4

Planning for Implementation

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Phase 4

Planning for Implementation

During this phase of the process, team members study the data and relevant research to make recommendations for each prioritized area of need. These recommendations are presented to the school community for review and discussion. The team then uses the approved recommendations to develop an action/implementation plan. A template for an action/implementation plan is included with the guide.

The final phase of the school review process is twofold:

- First, the team works closely with the entire school community to interpret the data that have been collected and determine what areas need to be addressed.
- Second, the team uses the feedback from the entire school community to develop a written implementation plan.

During Phase 4, the entire school community—teachers, support staff, central office staff, parents, and other stakeholders—are included in the planning and implementation process. This is because effective school improvement depends on the hard work and commitment of everyone involved. Many school improvements fail because the implementation decisions are made by administrators or a small team and handed *down* to teachers, staff, and parents who may not be aware of why the areas of need were selected.

Several elements must be present for a school improvement plan to be fully implemented. These include:

- Full support and "buy-in" from school community—including teachers, support staff, administrators, and a representative sample of parents
- Support of the central office for the reform
- Adequate resources to carry out the reform
- A well-articulated plan with clear goals, objectives, responsible persons, resources, and timelines

- A focus on student achievement for all subgroups

The process outlined in Phase 4 can be used to create a clear, supported implementation plan. The tasks are organized into the following sections:

- Presenting and interpreting the data
- Planning for implementation

Presenting and Interpreting the Data

Step 1: Convene Data Clarification Meeting

The team meets to review the data and analyses. After all data have been gathered and analyzed, complete the following:

- Make sure all the data are organized in a way that can be easily read and interpreted. You may choose to use the data analysis matrixes included with the *School Review Process Guide*, develop your own matrixes, or use reports or matrixes that may be provided with a data analysis software package.
- Review all the data, look for glaring inconsistencies or obvious patterns, and discuss your observations.

Step 2: Convene Data Interpretation Retreat

Once the team is familiar with the data and analyses, set aside a half or full day to present the data to the entire staff. Include teachers, support staff, and administrators (building and central office). Suggestions for the meeting include:

- Organize the participants into groups. Each group should include teachers, support staff, an administrator/coordinator, and a member of the school improvement team. In a very large school, you might conduct a meeting with all administrators/coordinators prior to the staff meeting in order to familiarize them with the data. This will allow you to place an administrator/coordinator or a member of the school improvement team on each team.
- Provide a copy of the completed data summary matrixes to each participant prior to the meeting.
- Present the data to the entire group using overhead transparencies or LCD projection.
  - Review the four types of data—demographic, achievement, program, and perception—and emphasize how each is important and how each relates to the others.
  - Although groups should look closely at student achievement data, encourage them to look at the program and perception data for support and important perspectives on the school program.
  - Make sure there are team presenters at each table who are prepared to answer questions that might come up regarding the data.
- Have each group meet for about 45–60 minutes to review all of the data and write:
  - A summary of key findings – include strengths and areas of need
  - Statement(s) for each key finding on how the data support each finding
  - Possible reason(s) for each finding by brainstorming a list of possible root causes
  - Questions for further investigation.

- Remind each group that the focus should be on improving student achievement and that participants should review all four data types.
- Have each group share its findings with the whole group. Record the key findings on a large pad, overhead, computer screen, or whiteboard. The group facilitator should collect the writing statements from the groups.
- As each group shares its findings, data statements, and possible reasons or root causes, instruct the entire group to begin looking for patterns and inconsistencies.
- Still in the large-group setting, aggregate the group findings into one list. This may require a process of negotiation.

Step 3: Convene Team Meeting to Aggregate Findings

The team meets to aggregate the findings and data support statements with possible reasons for the areas of need. Look closely for common areas of concern. The findings and data support statements need to be placed into one clear document that can be redistributed to the entire staff. You may need to consider some of the following questions when compiling the findings:

- Are the findings of the entire staff consistent with the findings of the team?
- Is the team looking at everything as objectively as possible?
- What are the possible "blind spots"—strengths or weaknesses that the team might not be seeing?
- Are there strong "factions" operating in the school or community that may be affecting the way the data are viewed?

None of these questions has a clear answer. They need to be considered so that the team can return to the full staff with a clear, reasonably accurate, and objective statement of findings that is supported by the data. However, it is important at this stage to stay true to the findings of the whole staff. A perception among the school community that their input to the process is not valued can pose a detriment to the implementation process.

Planning for Implementation

Step 1: Convene Meeting to Prioritize Action and Align Implementation with the Quality Indicators.

The entire school staff should convene for a half day (or ample amount of time). Divide the staff into groups that represent teachers, support staff, and administrators.

- Provide each group with a list of common findings and data support statements that were compiled by the school improvement team.
- Provide each group with a list of the six quality indicators.
- Have each team choose a maximum of five areas of concern for which an action plan should be implemented. Have the groups prioritize these five areas (1–5) and align them with one or more of the quality indicators. Emphasize that the five priority action items can and do change from year to year. However, participants should consider the previous action items when determining new ones. The groups should select three to five that they feel are the most urgent to implement in the coming year.

- Share the priority list, and through a process of negotiation, arrive at a list of three to five action items for implementation. The final, aggregated list need not be prioritized. Keep in mind that more than five action items are difficult to attain in a year's time.

Step 2: Develop the Implementation Plan

Engage various stakeholders—administrators, staff, parent representatives, and community members—in developing the implementation plan. Organize several committees. Consider inviting a member from the school leadership team to serve on each committee. Make sure that the membership of these committees reflects expertise and interest. For instance, a key finding on instruction might be addressed by a committee of faculty and administrators, while a key finding dealing with school climate or parental involvement might include parents, support staff, and community members. Suggestions for action steps include the following:

- Assign each committee one key finding.
- Set a specific timeline or deadline (two to three weeks, depending on workload).
- Charge each committee with the following:
  - Rewording each "key finding" into a goal statement. (A goal is something you aim for. It is specific, measurable, and time targeted.)
  - Researching best practices to address each goal. A number of sources provide research on best practices in instruction and school improvement. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (www.centerforcsri.org) maintains a database of research on educational practices.

Example of Action/ Objective

Goal: To increase African-American student participation in advanced classes:

- Review present and past academic data for African-American students.
- Compile a list of possible candidates.
- Meet with grade-level teachers and guidance counselors to solicit input on performance and interest of students.
- If this action takes place after the beginning of the school year, meet with students individually to discuss change of placement, change of schedule, support systems, and goal setting for success.
- Inform parents of the changes and the need for parental support.
- Inform teachers of new placements.
- Document the new number of African-American students placed in advanced classes.
- Review student data and collect teacher feedback weekly to monitor student progress and provide extra support as needed.
- Examine student performance data on standardized assessments to evaluate the success of the action.

A Model for Writing Goals

***S**pecific*

***M**easurable*

***A**ttainable*

***R**esearch-based*

***T**ime-bound*

The U.S. Department of Education website (www.ed.gov) includes links to the What Works Clearinghouse, the regional comprehensive centers, and other resources.

- Developing specific, measurable actions that can be implemented to achieve each goal.
- Developing the measure of effectiveness for each objective.

Each committee will make its recommendation, based on research, to the staff and participating parents or community members.

For each goal, answer the following questions:

- What is the goal to be achieved?
- What are the actions to be taken?
- What is the research that supports the actions/objectives?
- How will the actions/objectives be measured?
- How will success be determined?

Ask each committee to submit a written report to the team that answers the five questions in detail. The team will then format the reports from the committees and distribute them to all participants for consideration a week prior to the final full staff/community meeting.

Step 3: Build Consensus for the Implementation Plan

Convene a meeting with all school staff, central office representatives, and participating community members. Review committee recommendations for action and reach a group consensus on each goal statement and the action/objective. The following are suggestions:

- Project each of the goal statements on a screen along with the actions/objectives recommended by the committee.
- Entertain input and discussion among the whole group
- Assign someone to take notes.

Step 4: Finalize the Implementation Plan

Convene a team meeting to review each action and develop the specificity needed for a workable implementation plan. The following are suggestions:

- Make sure each action is worded as a measurable objective.
- For each objective, indicate the following:
  - Who is responsible to oversee its full implementation?
  - What is the timeline for implementation?
  - What benchmarks will be measured and at what interval will benchmarks

be taken to assure that implementation is progressing?

- How will full implementation be evaluated?
- What are the resources that should be allocated to meet each objective?

A template for a school improvement implementation plan is included on page 97. Many districts and some states have prescribed templates for school improvement plans. Be aware that the components noted previously above help make the plan a living, working document.

Conclusion

A school improvement process is never really completed. School improvement is an ongoing, dynamic process because schools are dynamic organizations.

While students change every year as they move from grade to grade, many schools experience rapid demographic shifts in student population during short periods of time. Data must be ongoing. Staff also will change. A strong program of professional development, leadership development, and teacher leadership will contribute to teachers' professional growth. With the increase of teacher skills will come more possibilities for school improvement. Some of the goals will be ongoing from year to year and some will change as the needs of the school change. Some goals or objectives will be met and new ones will be established through an ongoing school improvement process.

While the membership of your school improvement team will change, it should be a permanent part of the structure of your school. No matter how great a school improvement plan is or how much it is accepted by the school community members, it should be revisited every year to evaluate the progress of the goals/actions/objectives, incorporate current data, consider student and/or staff changes, and make any changes that are needed to keep the plan active and ensure continuous improvement. Even the best schools can be better!

School Improvement Planning Template

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Goal # _____

Action/Objective #_____
What is going to be done to address the goal?

Professional Development
What training will be needed for staff?

Results
What evidence will determine completion?

Resources
How much will this activity cost?

Timeline
When will this activity occur?

Person(s) Responsible
Who will make sure this action is completed successfully?

Research Rationale
What research or best practice(s) support this activity?

Evaluation
How will success be measured?

Contents

Appendix One: Annotated Bibliography..... **101**

Annotated Bibliography

Quality Indicator #1: Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum

Enyedy, N. & Mukhopadhyay, S. (2007). They don't show nothing I didn't know: Emergent tensions between culturally relevant pedagogy and mathematics pedagogy**.** *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 16*(2), 139-174.

This article describes data from the Community Mapping Project, a set of statistical activities and inquiry projects within a summer seminar for high school students. In designing the Community Mapping Project, the authors attempted to create conditions under which urban students would come to recognize how mathematics is relevant to their lives and their communities. Using mixed methods, the authors analyzed the pre- and post-assessments and final projects of 25 high school students to investigate what they learned from their experience. They also analyzed the data from video case studies to begin to understand how learning was organized. The qualitative analysis revealed several tensions that emerged between the goals and norms of the instantiation of a culturally relevant pedagogy and the goals and norms of the mathematics pedagogy. The authors argue that how these tensions were navigated mediated the opportunity students had for learning statistics. This article provides some considerations and lessons learned that may help inform both teachers who wish to rethink their mathematics pedagogy, as well as designers who wish to create culturally relevant curricula.

Ford, D. Y., Moore, J. L., & Harmon, D. A. (2005). Integrating multicultural and gifted education: A curricular framework. *Theory into Practice*, *44*(2), 125-137.

This article raises a number of critical questions related to multiculturalism and gifted education. In particular, the authors suggest that culturally relevant content is lacking in gifted education programs. They make the case that gifted students of color are being shortchanged by gifted education programs that lack infusion of diversity issues; these students would benefit substantially from gifted education programs that infuse multiculturalism throughout the curricula.

IES National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2007, June). *Evidence-based decision-making: Assessing reading across the curriculum interventions.* Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL_2007003.pdf

When selecting reading across the curriculum interventions, educators should consider the extent of the evidence on intervention effectiveness and the fit with the school or district context, whether they are purchasing a product from vendors or developing it internally. This report provides guidance in decision making. It looks at what interventions states and districts might consider in

their plans to improve reading outcomes at the secondary level. A primary purpose of this report is to compare these interventions in a way that is helpful to decision makers. One important dimension of comparison is the extent of evidence of intervention effectiveness.

IES National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2007, November). *The predictive validity of selected benchmark assessments used in the mid-atlantic region.* Retrieved August 12, 2008, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/pdf/REL_2007017.pdf

This report examines the availability and quality of predictive validity data for a selection of benchmark assessments identified by state and district personnel as being in use within mid-atlantic region jurisdictions. The report finds that evidence is generally lacking in predictive validity with respect to state assessment tests. The key question this study addresses is: What evidence is there for a selection of commonly-used commercial benchmark assessments, of the predictive relationship of each instrument with respect to the state assessment? While the commonly used benchmark assessments in the mid-atlantic region jurisdictions may possess strong internal psychometric characteristics, the report finds that evidence is generally lacking of the predictive validity with respect to the required state or summative assessments.

Jitendra, A. K., Edwards, L. L., Sacks, G., & Jacobson, L. A. (2004). What research says about vocabulary instruction for students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 70*(3), 299-322.

This article summarizes published research on vocabulary instruction involving students with learning disabilities. Nineteen vocabulary studies that comprised 27 investigations were located. Study interventions gleaned from the review included keyword or mnemonic approaches, cognitive strategy instruction (e.g., semantic features analysis), direct instruction (DI), constant time delay (CTD), activity-based methods, and computer-assisted instruction (CAI). While findings for the keyword, cognitive strategy, DI, CTD, and activity-based procedures were generally effective in enhancing vocabulary performance for students with learning disabilities, results for CAI were mixed. The studies are discussed with regard to study characteristics (e.g., intervention intensity, instructional arrangement). Implications and recommendations for future research and classroom practice in teaching vocabulary to students with learning disabilities are discussed.

National Research Council Committee for a Review of the Evaluation Data on the Effectiveness of NSF-Supported and Commercially Generated Mathematics Curriculum Materials. (2004). *On evaluating curricular effectiveness: Judging the quality of K-12 mathematics evaluations.* Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

This book reviews the evaluation research literature that has accumulated around 19 K-12 mathematics curricula and breaks new ground in framing an ambitious and rigorous approach to curriculum evaluation that has relevance beyond mathematics. The committee that produced this

book consisted of mathematicians, mathematics educators, and methodologists who began with the following charge: Evaluate the quality of the evaluations of 13 National Science Foundation-supported and 6 commercially-generated mathematics curriculum materials; determine whether the available data are sufficient for evaluating the efficacy of these materials; and, if not, develop recommendations for the design of a project that could result in the generation of more reliable and valid data for evaluating such materials. The committee collected, reviewed, and classified almost 700 studies, solicited expert testimony during two workshops, developed an evaluation framework, established dimensions/criteria for three methodologies (content analyses, comparative studies, and case studies), drew conclusions on the body of studies, and made recommendations for future research.

Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M. (2005). *Accessing the general curriculum: Including students with disabilities in standards-based reform* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

In this book, the authors provide updated frameworks and strategies with examples and flowcharts for fitting special education into the frameworks created by national standards and assessments. This invaluable resource provides K-12 educators with the support necessary to produce expected results from every learner. The authors begin with far-reaching legal implications and connect them with individual students to show teachers how to: (a) use curriculum as a map for guiding students toward achievement; (b) understand learning research as a bridge to the learning-teaching connection; (c) relate each student's disability to his or her academic performance; (d) design alternate assessment tools and curriculum; and (e) link goals, objectives, and benchmarks to state assessment criteria. Affording special education students accommodations and modifications to their individual curriculum will improve their performance, enhance educators' ability to help them advance, and, ultimately, improve the evaluation of their progress throughout their academic career.

Quality Indicator #2: Effective Instruction

Davis, G. A. (2004). *Education of the gifted and talented*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

The new edition of this text provides updated views, events, and research findings, including a study of extraordinarily successful career women, more attention to gifted education in rural areas, counseling of gay students, and suicide prevention. Chapters have the following titles: Gifted Education: Matching Instruction with Needs; Characteristics of Gifted Students; Program Planning; Identifying Gifted and Talented Students; Acceleration; Enrichment and Grouping; Curriculum Models; Leadership, Affective Learning, and Character Education; Creativity I: The Creative Person, Creative Process, and Creative Dramatics; Creativity II: Teaching for Creative Growth; Teaching Thinking Skills; Cultural Diversity and Children from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds: The Invisible Gifted; Underachievement: Diagnosis and Treatment; The Cultural Underachieve-

ment of Females; Gifted Children with Disabilities; Parenting the Gifted Child; Understanding and Counseling Gifted Students; and Program Evaluation.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. S. (2005). *Enhancing mathematical problem solving for students with disabilities. Journal of Special Education, 39*(1), 45-57.

This article is a summary of three experimental studies designed to identify which of four instructional designs was most effective in improving mathematical problem solving by third graders with disabilities. The article outlines the researchers' step-by-step progression, from Study 1 through Study 3, to design the most effective combination of mathematical problem-solving strategies using traditional math practices, activities designed to guide student development of schematics for mathematics problems, diagram development for mathematical problems, peer-assisted instruction, computer-assisted instruction, and small-group tutoring activities. In general, the authors found that mathematics problem-solving instruction is more effective with students with disabilities when it involves instruction on problem solution rules, schemata development activities, self-regulating learning activities, small-group instruction, and substantial practice requirements.

IES National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2007, October). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*. Retrieved on August 10, 2008, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/REL_2007033.pdf

Of the more than 1,300 studies identified as potentially addressing the effect of teacher professional development on student achievement in three key content areas, nine meet What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards, attesting to the paucity of rigorous studies that directly examine this link. This report finds that teachers who receive substantial professional development—an average of 49 hours in the nine studies—can boost their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points. All nine studies focused on elementary school teachers and their students. About half focused on lower elementary grades (kindergarten and first grade), and about half on upper elementary grades (fourth and fifth grades).

Learning First Alliance. (2003). *Beyond islands of excellence: What districts can do to improve instruction and achievement in all schools*. Retrieved July 28, 2008, from http://www.learningfirst.org/publications/districts/

To address the need for better information on successful systemwide reform of low-performing schools, the Learning First Alliance studied five high-poverty districts that have been making strides in improving student achievement. More specifically, the Learning First Alliance focused on learning more about how districts promoted good instruction across their systems. The report addresses five research questions: How did the districts create the will to begin instructional reform? What strategies guided their reform efforts? In what ways did districts change their approaches to professional development? How did interactions among the stakeholders facilitate or hinder instructional

reform? and How was leadership distributed across stakeholders to facilitate improvement? To answer these questions, the Learning First Alliance conducted case studies of five school districts across the United States. The study found that these five districts had the courage to acknowledge poor performance and sought solutions; had put in place a systemwide approach to improving instruction that articulated curricular content and provided instructional support; had instilled visions that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement; made decisions based on data, not instinct; adopted new approaches to professional development that involved a coherent and district-organized set of strategies to improve instruction; redefined leadership roles; and committed to sustaining reform over the long haul. The report makes several recommendations on instructional reform. Appendixes include methodology of study and district student achievement data for the five featured districts.

MDRC. (2007, December). *Instructional leadership, teaching quality, and student achievement: Suggestive evidence from three urban school districts*. Retrieved August 5, 2008, from http://www.mdrc.org/publications/470/full.pdf

This instructional leadership study offers evidence that suggests providing instruction-related professional development to school principals can improve teaching and learning in their schools. The study examined a theory of school change articulated by the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. The theory was that through leadership training, school principals learn about high-quality instruction and about actions they can take to motivate and support their teachers. Principals then organize professional learning for their teachers and otherwise help teachers improve their classroom practices. With improved instruction, the theory maintains, student achievement would improve. To test this theory, the researchers recruited 49 elementary schools in three districts that had been working with the researchers (and therefore receiving some level of professional development) for one to five years at the time the study began. The study focused on elementary schools because the researchers reasoned that the principal's role as an instructional leader would be especially pronounced in these settings. This study suggested that in-service professional development for principals can set in motion positive changes in teaching and learning.

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems.*(2006). Addressing diversity in schools: Culturally responsive pedagogy*. Retrieved August 11, 2008, from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Diversity_Brief.pdf?v_document_name=Diversity%20Brief

As more and more students from diverse backgrounds populate 21st century classrooms, and efforts mount to identify effective methods to teach these students, the need for pedagogical approaches that are culturally responsive intensifies. Today's classrooms require teachers to educate students varying in culture, language, abilities, and many other characteristics. To meet this challenge, teachers must employ not only theoretically sound but also culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers must create a classroom culture where all students, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are welcomed, supported, and provided with the best opportunity to learn.

This publication defines culturally responsive pedagogy and offers strategies for policymakers, school districts, and teachers. Specific activities and instructional methods are provided for schools and teachers to promote culturally responsive classrooms.

National Education Association. (2005). *Culture Abilities Resilience Effort (C.A.R.E.): Strategies for closing the achievement gaps*. Retrieved August 4, 2008, from http://www.nea.org/teachexperience/careguide.html

Despite recent gains in student achievement, gaps continue to exist among populations of students. The purpose of the guide is to offer research-based suggestions for practice, to challenge educators to be both accountable to demands while offering quality education, and to show educators where to gain access to additional resources. It is the goal of the writers to inspire educators to raise the achievement level of underachievers by embracing C.A.R.E. Each chapter emphasizes one of these themes and includes references to original research, websites, books, and other publications that educators may find helpful. Additional chapters examine how to incorporate the themes of C.A.R.E. in community involvement and systemic organization. Numerous ready-to-use approaches, strategies, and activities are included, and are supplemented by references and resources.

National High School Center. (2006, November) . *Emerging evidence on improving high school student achievement and graduation rates: The effects of four popular improvement programs.* Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_EmergingEvidence_010907.pdf

This study offers research-based lessons from four high school-specific programs. Insight on how to address the challenges of assisting students who enter high school with poor academic skills, improving instructional content and practice, creating a personalized learning environment, preparing students for the world beyond high school, and stimulating change in schools and districts is highlighted. Primary findings indicate that instructional improvement and personalization are the twin pillars of high school reform. The research from this study suggests that extended class periods, special catch-up courses, high-quality curricula, and training for teachers in those curricula can improve student achievement. Further, transforming schools into small learning communities and assigning students to faculty advisers can increase students' feelings of connectedness to their teachers.

Noguera, P. (2004) . Transforming high schools. *Educational Leadership, 61*(8), 26-31.

A study of 10 high schools found that some schools just go through the motions of reform, whereas other schools listen to teachers, parents, and students and make sure stakeholders understand the purpose of reform. The schools involved in this study had high minority and low-income student populations. The researcher studied the reform process and focused on the following factors: high-stakes testing, attempts to personalize school, and ability to implement reform. The author

discusses the reasons for success in two of the schools under study. Several school-level instructional strategies are highlighted for their ability to raise student achievement.

Williams, T., Perry, M., Oregon, I., Brazil, N., Hakuta, K., Haertel, E., Kirst, M., & Levin, J. (2007). *Similar English learner students, different results: Why do some schools do better? A follow-up analysis based upon a large-scale survey of California elementary schools serving high proportions of low-income and EL stud*ents. Mountain View, CA: EdSource.

This report extends the analysis of an earlier *Similar Students, Different Results* study. The new analysis is based on survey data of 4,700 K-5 classroom teachers and principals in 237 California elementary schools from 137 different school districts across the state. All the schools chosen for the study had high levels of student poverty and English language learners (ELLs) as well as low parent education levels. The study found that there were four interrelated broad school practices that differentiated the lower from the higher performing elementary schools: (1) hiring teachers who possess specific qualities and experience; (2) using assessment data to improve instruction; (3) implementing a horizontally and vertically aligned, standards-based curriculum; and (4) setting high standards for student learning. The new analysis also includes a small set of questions about specific ELL instructional practices and teacher qualifications that were not included in the previous study.

Quality Indicator #3: Use of Formative Assessment and Student Assessment Data

Annenberg Institute for School Reform. (2008). *Beyond test scores: Leading indicators for education.* Retrieved August 10, 2008, from http://www.annenberginstitute.org/pdf/LeadingIndicators.pdf

This report presents alternative forms of data that school districts and schools can use along with test scores. These forms of data are described as leading indicators that allow a glance at school progress prior to actual test results. The authors list the following indicators as useful to the data-informed decision-making process: (a) early reading proficiency, (b) enrollment in pre-algebra and algebra, (c) overage/undercredited students, (d) college admissions test scores to clarify high school placements, and (e) student attendance and suspensions. Harder-to-quantify indicators are described as (a) special education enrollment, (b) student engagement, and (c) teacher and principal quality.

Felner, R. D., Bolton, N., Seitsinger, A. M., Brand, S., & Burns, A. (2008). Creating a statewide educational data system for accountability and improvement: A comprehensive information and assessment system for making evidence-based change at school, district, and policy levels. *Psychology in the Schools*, *45*(3), 235-256.

This article reports on one ongoing statewide effort to create a high-quality data reporting and utilization system (i.e., High-Performance Learning Community [HiPlaces] Assessment) to inform an educational accountability and improvement system. This effort has undergone refinement for more than a decade. The authors describe the features of this system, particularly how empirically-based psychological theory and research informed both the development and the overall design of the assessment method. This system, unlike those used by other educational institutions, is unusual. From the onset of the development through implementation, the assessment moved well beyond the simple assessment of the performance and achievement of students. It included a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the developmental, educational, fiscal, and policy conditions that comprise the ecology of the public education system, as well as of the developmental and educational needs and attainment of students. The use of data was integral in guiding specific and ongoing, state-, district-, school-, and classroom-level improvement plans and efforts, including the development, monitoring, evaluation, and refinement of the program. The major goal that guided this system is, and always has been, the enhancement of schools and students' lives.

Lachat, M. A. & Smith, S. (2005). Practices that support data use in urban high schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk, 10*(3), 333-349.

This article presents initial findings of a case study focusing on data use in five low-performing urban high schools undergoing comprehensive schoolwide reform. The case study investigated: (a) the ways in which disaggregated data can be used to examine progress and guide improvement in the process of restructuring urban, low-performing high schools; (b) factors and conditions that either promote or act as barriers to data use; and (c) the policy and practice implications of achieving effective data use in a high school reform process. Study findings point to several key factors that have an impact on data use in the study sites: the quality and accuracy of available data, staff access to timely data, the capacity for data disaggregation, the collaborative use of data organized around a clear set of questions, and the leadership structures that support schoolwide use of data. The findings build on current literature and contribute new knowledge of the key roles played by a data team and a data coach in fostering effective data use in high school reform.

Mertler, C. A. (2007). *Interpreting standardized test scores: Strategies for data-driven instructional decision making*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

This book is designed to help K-12 teachers and administrators understand the nature of standardized tests and, in particular, the scores that result from them. This useful manual helps teachers develop the skills necessary to incorporate these test scores into various types of instructional

decision making—a process known as "data-driven decision making"—necessitated by the needs of their students. This book: helps readers understand, interpret, and use standardized test scores to improve classroom instruction (i.e., several specific examples are given for interpreting test scores and developing a plan to revise instruction based on those results); offers activities for application and reflection (e.g., follow-up activities and discussion points are provided for experienced and pre-service teachers across K-12 grade levels); and presents successful case studies. The author includes interviews with classroom teachers, building administrators, and district-level administrators who have successfully engaged in a process of incorporating test scores into decision making.

North Central Regional Laboratory. (2004). *After the test: Closing the achievement gaps with data*. Retrieved August 5, 2008, from http://www.ncrel.org/gap/studies/basrc.htm

The primary goal of this study was to examine and compare two groups of schools: one group that demonstrated progress in closing achievement gaps, and one group that did not. Thirty-two schools were selected for study across the six counties of the San Francisco Bay Area. Evaluators collected data through the use of surveys to all 32 schools that inventoried the policies and strategies being used. Three schools with data to show they were closing achievement gaps significantly were selected and researched through interviews, observations, and document review as case studies. Finally, focus groups were conducted with teachers and students from six gap-closing schools. The findings suggest several areas on which the gap-closing schools focused in order to improve the achievement of students of color. Schools that closed the gaps used data to drive school improvement, and provided professional development and support for teachers to use data. These schools also dealt with issues of race directly and fostered an environment that was supportive of discussions about race. Leadership was important in this area. Finally, gap-closing schools focused their efforts around a few specific issues (such as literacy) rather than trying to implement a wide variety of programs.

Tienken, C. & Wilson, M. (2001). State standards, assessments, and instruction. *ERIC Digest Reproduction Service* [ED458215]. Retrieved August 15, 2008, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/19/5b/8b.pdf

This digest describes a program used by two New Jersey educators to help teachers improve instruction through a deeper understanding of state standards and test specifications. Understanding how standards-based tests are constructed is the first step in being able to use them to guide and improve instruction. The authors recommend, as the route to understanding, a three-part process of delineation, alignment, and calibration for developing an understanding of state assessments and using that understanding to improve instruction. Delineation is the process of identifying all aspects or dimensions of a particular subject domain. It involves using state documents that describe the assessment to analyze its characteristics and components. Examples are given from the New Jersey standards and test specification manuals.

Wisconsin Center for Education Research. (2007, February). *The roles and practices of student services staff as data-driven instructional leaders*. Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/28/09/d8.pdf

This paper explores the ways in which school leaders are turning to student services staff as local experts in data analysis and use to meet the demands of high-stakes accountability. The authors collected data, as part of a five-year National Science Foundation-funded study on how school leaders create data-driven systems to improve instruction. They found that while schools already had significant capacity to design curriculum-level interventions to address the needs of groups of students, leaders in these schools turned to special education practices and professionals to provide the in-house expertise necessary to create a variety of student-level interventions. This paper provides a picture of the increased role that student services staff have had in developing and maintaining program and student-level support programs. Specifically, it investigates two central issues: (1) the practices of student services staff provide a precedent for student-level intervention design; and (2) student services staff play new roles as data savvy instructional leaders.

Quality Indicator #4: Positive School Culture Focused on Achievement

Education Trust. (2005, November). *Gaining traction, gaining ground: How some high schools accelerate learning for struggling students*. Retrieved August 11, 2008, from http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/6226B581-83C3-4447-9CE7-31C5694B9EF6/0/GainingTractionGainingGround.pdf

This report is the result of a study into the practices of public high schools that serve high concentrations of either low-income or minority children and that have a strong track record of accelerating learning for students who enter high school below grade level. This study compared and contrasted the practices of these high-impact schools with similar high schools that have only an average impact on student performance. The study examined seven public high schools. Four were "high-impact"—that is, they produced unusually large growth among students who entered significantly behind. The study compared these high-impact schools with three average-impact schools with similar demographics. By looking at both sets of schools, the researchers hoped to find out what the high-impact schools did differently than the average-impact schools. Upon analyzing the data, the authors found that the high-impact schools have many characteristics in common with average-impact schools. Each practice described may not be evident at every high-impact school or every average-impact school, but the study found that high-impact schools shared a common range of practices, as did average-impact schools.

Koth, C. W., Bradshaw, C. P., & Leaf, P. J. (2008). A multilevel study of predictors of student perceptions of school climate: The effect of classroom-level factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(1), 96-104.

A positive school climate is an important component of successful and effective schools, and thus is often an aim of schoolwide initiatives. Climate has traditionally been conceptualized as a school-level factor and is often assumed to be related to other school-level factors (e.g., school size). This study examined variations in perceptions of climate based on individual-, classroom-, and school-level factors to determine the influence of predictors at multiple levels. Data came from 2,468 fifth grade students from 37 public elementary schools. Two aspects of students' perception of school climate, order and discipline, and achievement motivation were examined. Multi-level analyses in hierarchical linear modeling indicate that individual-level factors (race and sex) accounted for the largest proportion of variance in perceptions of school climate. School-level factors (e.g., school size and faculty turnover) and several classroom-level factors (e.g., characteristics of the teacher, class size, and the concentration of students with behavior problems) also were significant predictors of perceptions of climate. These findings suggest that characteristics of the classroom environment are important to consider when aiming to improve school climate.

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. (2006). *Proactive culturally responsive discipline*. Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://www.nccrest.org/Exemplars/exemplar_culturally_responsive_discipline.pdf?v_document_name=culturally%20responsive%20discipline

The ways that schools intervene with students' challenging behavior have been historically "reactive, exclusionary, and ineffective" according to researchers. Traditional reactive discipline interventions include detention, suspension, and expulsion—all of which punish students by excluding them from school and limiting opportunities to receive positive support for behavior change. Furthermore, punitive and reactive disciplinary measures have been linked to the increased severity and incidence of the target behaviors. This exemplar considers how one urban middle school in Phoenix, Arizona, incorporates proactive discipline into the everyday practices of the school community. The result is a safe, positive school climate, leading to a reduction of student discipline problems. In turn, a disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education due to social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties was prevented.

Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. (1992). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved August 7, 2008, from http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html

This report offers a synthesis of findings from research studies that have identified effective classroom and school-level disciplinary practices. The studies are research documents that reveal relationships between disciplinary practices and student behavioral outcomes. The strategies applied in the research to combat discipline issues included a variety of classroom management practices, policy structure, specific programs (e.g., Assertive Discipline, Positive Approach to Discipline), counseling programs, the teaching of prosocial behavior, behavioral reinforcement practices,

training in classroom management, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, corporal punishment, and suspension. The report also includes a list of guidelines that school personnel can follow in order to improve the quality of discipline in their schools and classrooms.

Pollack, I., & Sundermann, C. (2001). Creating safe schools: A comprehensive approach. *Juvenile Justice Journal, 8*(1). Retrieved August 15, 2008, from http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjjournal_2001_6/jj2.html

This report describes the benefits of developing comprehensive school safety plans that are integrated into the overall school improvement process. Engaging students in the school's safety plan in the early grades and reinforcing the plan throughout their education is an effective way to enhance school safety. Comprehensive school safety plans can aid in improving other areas of schooling such as academics, student discipline, school climate, staff morale, and use of resources. The report lists 10 elements of providing schools with the foundation needed to ensure a safe learning environment. Used along with a strategic planning process to help design and implement the school safety plan, they will allow schools to go beyond creating a mere crisis response plan.

Sugai, G., Horner, R. H., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., Nelson, C. M.; Scott, T., Liaupsin, C., Sailor, W., Turnbull, A. P., Turnbull III, H. R., Wickham, D., Wilcox, B., & Ruef, M. (2000). Applying positive behavior support and functional behavioral assessment in schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *2*(3), 131-144.

Positive behavior support (PBS) and functional behavioral assessment (FBA) are two significant concepts of the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The purposes of this article are to describe the context in which PBS and FBA are needed, and definitions and features of PBS and FBA. An important message is that positive behavioral interventions and supports involve the whole school, and successful implementation emphasizes the identification, adoption, and sustained use of effective policies, systems, data-based decision making, and effective practices. Systems-level challenges also are discussed.

Wentzel, K. R. (2002). Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence. *Child Development, 73*(1), 287–301.

This study examines the utility of parent socialization models for understanding teachers' influence on student adjustment in middle school. Teachers were assessed with respect to their modeling of motivation and to parenting dimensions of control, maturity demands, democratic communication, and nurturance. Student adjustment was defined in terms of social and academic goals and interest in class, classroom behavior, and academic performance. Based on information from 452 sixth grade students from two suburban middle schools, results of multiple regressions indicated that teaching dimensions explained significant amounts of variance in student motivation, social behavior, and achievement. High expectations (maturity demands) were a consistent positive predictor of students' goals and interests, and negative feedback (lack of nurturance) was the most consistent

negative predictor of academic performance and social behavior. The role of motivation in mediating relations between teaching dimensions and social behavior and academic achievement also was examined; evidence for mediation was not found. Relationships between teaching dimensions and student outcomes were the same for African American and European American students, and for boys and girls. The implications of parent socialization models for understanding effective teaching are discussed.

Quality Indicator #5: Effective School Leadership

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2004). *Profiles in leadership: Innovative approaches to transforming the American high school.* Retrieved August 14, 2008, from http://www.all4ed.org/files/ProfilesInLeadership.pdf

This collection of essays is written by some of America's foremost education innovators, including former Virginia Governor Mark Warner, former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, and Melinda French Gates. It presents perspectives from a range of influential educators, foundation executives, and public officials.

IES National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (2008, May). *Turning around chronically low-performing schools: IES practice guide.* Retrieved August 12, 2008, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/Turnaround_pg_04181.pdf

The goal of this practice guide is to formulate specific and coherent evidence-based recommendations for use by educators addressing a multifaceted challenge that lacks developed or evaluated packaged approaches. The challenge is turning around low-performing schools. The guide provides practical, clear information on critical topics related to school turnarounds and is based on the best available evidence as judged by the review team.

Leech, D., & Fulton, C. R. (2008). Faculty perceptions of shared decision making and the principal's *leadership* behaviors in secondary *schools* in a large urban district. *Education, 128*(4), 630-644.

The purpose of this correlational study was to explore the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the leadership behaviors of secondary school principals in a large urban school district and their perceptions of the level of shared decision making practiced in their schools. Leadership behavior was operationalized by the responses to five practices: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. The level of shared decision making was measured by responses in the areas of planning, policy development, curriculum and instruction, student achievement, pupil personnel services, staff development, and budget management. The population for the study was a sample selected from all secondary

schools in a large public school system. The sample consisted of 646 participants from 26 schools. The findings should inform the practice of school principals as they create empowering cultures in their schools.

Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Based on their analysis of 69 studies conducted since 1970 that met their selection criteria and a recent survey of more than 650 building principals, the authors have developed a list of 21 leadership responsibilities that have a significant effect on student achievement. Readers will learn: the specific behaviors associated with the 21 leadership responsibilities; the difference between first-order change and second-order change and the leadership responsibilities that are most important for each; how to work smart by choosing the right work that improves student achievement; the advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive school reform models for improving student achievement; how to develop a site-specific approach to improving student achievement, using a framework of 11 factors and 39 action steps; and a five-step plan for effective school leadership. Combining rigorous research with practical advice, this book gives school administrators the guidance they need to provide strong leadership for better schools.

MDRC. (2002, April). *Scaling up first things first: Site selection and the planning year*. Retrieved July 29, 2008, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1a/78/68.pdf

First Things First is a comprehensive intervention to transform low-performing public schools with high percentages of non-white and at-risk students. It encompasses major changes in school structure, instruction, and accountability and governance. The program model, which is grounded both in research and the best practices of schools serving high-risk youth, was developed by the Institute for Research and Reform in Education and was initially mounted in the Kansas City, Kansas, school system in 1998. New schools were phased in Missouri, Mississippi, and Texas. This report highlights an early stage in the scaling-up effort: Selection of new sites and planning within them for the initiative's implementation.

MDRC. (2007, December). *Instructional leadership, teaching quality, and student achievement: Suggestive evidence from three urban school districts*. Retrieved August 6, 2008 from http://www.mdrc.org/publications/470/full.pdf

This study offers evidence that suggests providing instruction-related professional development to school principals can improve teaching and learning in their schools. The study examined a theory of school change articulated by the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. The theory was that through leadership training, school principals learn about high-quality instruction and about actions they can take to motivate and support their teachers. Principals then organize

professional learning for their teachers and otherwise help teachers improve their classroom practices. With improved instruction, the theory maintained, student achievement would also improve. To test this theory, the researchers recruited 49 elementary schools in three districts that had been working with the researchers (and therefore receiving some level of professional development) for one to five years at the time the study began. The study focused on elementary schools because the researchers reasoned that the principal's role as an instructional leader would be especially pronounced in these settings. This study suggests that in-service professional development for principals can set in motion positive changes in teaching and learning.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: Olympia, WA. (2004, October). *Characteristics of improved school districts: Themes from research*. Retrieved August 11, 2008, from http://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/DistrictImprovementReport.pdf

This report distills findings from more 80 (mostly qualitative) research reports conducted in Washington State between 1989 and 2004. The study identified 13 interrelated common themes of districts that have shown significant improvement, and these are presented in four broad categories: (1) effective leadership (themes: focus on the learning of all students, use of dynamic and distributed leadership, and sustained improvement efforts over time); (2) quality teaching and learning (themes: high expectations and accountability for adults, coordinated and aligned curriculum and assessment, coordinated and embedded professional development, and quality classroom instruction); (3) support for systemwide improvement (themes: effective use of data, strategic allocation of resources, and policy and program coherence); and (4) clear and collaborative relationships (themes: professional culture and collaborative relationships, clear understanding of school and district roles and responsibilities, and interpreting and managing the external environment). These 13 themes and 4 categories (and their interconnectedness) are discussed.

Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (2007, October). *Evaluation of New Century High Schools: Profile of an initiative to create and sustain small, successful high schools.* Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/34/f0/96.pdf

The evaluation of the New Century High Schools (NCHS) initiative examined operations and student outcomes in 75 schools from 2002-2003 through 2005-2006. This report, the final in a series of annual evaluation reports, presents data collected during those years, with a focus on school year 2005-2006. The evaluation used the percent of students in the class of 2006 who graduated on time as its prime indicator of success. The study's central finding was that NCHS schools graduated more students on time than larger New York City schools with comparable students, and more students than New York City high schools generally. NCHS effects were notable with regard to dropout prevention and on-time graduation. Evaluators used both hierarchical multi-variate statistical methods and qualitative approaches to identify school features associated with student outcomes. The most important school-level influences on student performance, as measured by credit accrual, was the quality of instructional systems (including measures of the perceived alignment of

instruction with Regents standards), agreement on educational focus, the effectiveness of principal leadership, the quality and amount of professional development, teacher influence, and professional collaboration on instruction.

Quality Indicator #6: Parental and Community Engagement

Epstein, J. (2007). Connections count: Improving family and community involvement in secondary schools. *Principal Leadership, 8*(2), 16-22.

Educators at all school levels know that successful students at all ability levels have families who stay informed and involved in their children's education. Yet many middle level and high school teachers report that the only time they contact families is when students are in trouble. This disconnect between knowledge and behavior can be corrected with new approaches that make it possible for every school to organize an excellent partnership program. Research and field work with hundreds of elementary, middle level, and high schools across the country reveal four key components of effective and sustainable programs of family and community involvement: (1) action teams for partnerships; (2) the six types of involvement framework (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community); (3) action plans that are linked to goals for student success; and (4) evaluation and ongoing improvement. Middle level and high schools in the network are using the six types of involvement to focus on goals for student success. The framework helps schools identify ways that families and community partners can be involved without always having to come to meetings at the school building. With these guidelines, schools can create programs that enable all parents to remain engaged with their teens and their schools.

Harry, B., Klinger, J. K., & Hart, J. (2005). African American families under fire: Ethnographic views of family strengths. *Remedial and Special Education, 26*(2), 101-112.

This article focuses on the discrepancy between school personnel's negative stereotyping of African American families and the family information gleaned by ethnographic research. Using findings from a three-year ethnographic study of the special education placement process in a culturally diverse urban school district, the authors describe the general atmosphere of negativity that prevailed among school personnel with regard to African American families living in poverty. The article focuses on the families of three case study students who were referred to special education. Home visits and ethnographic interviews with caregivers revealed family strengths that were neither known nor tapped by school personnel. The authors interpret the findings in terms of the power of cultural capital and the discrepancy between the schools' perceptions of such capital and the capital actually possessed by families.

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. (2008, March). *Building collaboration between schools and parents of English language learners: Transcending barriers, creating opportunities*. Retrieved August 13, 2008, from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/PractitionerBrief_BuildingCollaboration.pdf

This Practitioner Brief is an analysis of research and practice illuminated by several factors that contribute to the paradoxical views of English language learners' (ELL) parents and their involvement in their children's schools and education. Each of these factors pertains to having the means and opportunity for viable parent-school collaboration, in relation to school-initiated efforts to build partnerships with parents; language; comprehensible information about U.S. schools and culturally and linguistically diverse families; special concerns related to special education referral and placement; immigrant isolation; and legal status. Considering each of these factors influencing meaningful ELL parent-school collaboration, a number of policy recommendations for schools and districts emerged. These recommendations were intended to guide school staff to better transcend existing barriers as well as support compliance with one or more of the legally mandated requirements established by No Child Left Behind act.

National Institute for Literacy. (2006). *The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading*. Retrieved August 14, 2008, from http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/pdf/lit_interventions.pdf

This report reviews the scientific literature on parent involvement in the acquisition of literacy from kindergarten to the third grade. It narrowly defines parent involvement in literacy acquisition to include parent-child activities that focus on reading. Meta-analytic procedures were used to analyze the study outcomes. Parent involvement was classified into three categories: (1) school-based involvement, which includes various parental activities and behaviors occurring in their children's school environment; (2) home-school conferencing, which involves communication between the parents and teachers or other school staff regarding children's academic achievement, enjoyment of school, and rate of progress; and (3) home-based involvement, which involves parents actively encouraging children to engage in learning in the home setting and providing learning opportunities for their children.

Sheldon, S. B. (2003). Linking school-family-community partnerships in urban elementary schools to student achievement on state tests. *Urban Review*, *35*(2), 149-166.

This study examines the relationship between the quality of school, family, and community partnership programs and student performance on state-mandated achievement tests. Data from 82 elementary schools, located in a large urban area, were collected to explore the relationship between family and community involvement and students' achievement test performance. Analyses show that, controlling for school characteristics, the degree to which schools were working to overcome challenges to family and community involvement predicted higher percentages of students scoring at or above satisfactory on state achievement tests. The findings suggest that schools' efforts to

involve families and the community in students' learning may be a useful approach to help students achieve in school, especially for students in early elementary grades. The findings also illustrate the importance for schools located in large urban areas to address obstacles to family and community involvement.

Stewart, E. B. (2008). Individual and school structural effects on African American high school students' academic achievement. *The High School Journal, 91*(2), 16-34.

This study is based on the ecological theory of human development and incorporates school-level characteristics into an investigation of the factors that influence adolescents' academic achievement. Using regression-based techniques that account for within school clustering of students, the research examines the extent to which individual-level and school structural variables predict academic achievement among a sample of tenth grade African American students. The results suggest that individual-level predictors—such as student effort, parent-child discussion, and associations with positive peers—play a substantial role in increasing student achievement. Further, the results suggest that school climate—in particular the sense of school cohesion felt by students, teachers, and administrators—is important to successful student outcomes. The author suggests that an approach that encompasses individual, family, and school level variables be considered when examining predictors for academic achievement.

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