

Developing a Model Planning Process for South Carolina Districts and Schools

We must be thinking more rigorously, realistically, and precisely about why we do what we do, what ends we hope to accomplish, and how we can document our successes in achieving those ends.

Lizabeth Schorr (Commentary, *Education Week*)

History of Educational Planning in South Carolina

Over the past twenty years three major educational legislative acts have addressed planning issues for districts and schools. Typically, the succeeding legislation has built upon or redefined the previous legislation; however, sometimes more contemporary terminology or planning practices were introduced.

In 1977 as a part of the Education Finance Act, each school was required to prepare an annual written report—the school improvement report—to focus on factors found in research to be effective in improving schools. Each district was required to prepare a written appraisal of the school improvement report of each school with emphasis on needs, goals, objectives, needed improvements, and the plan for utilization of resources.

In 1993 as part of the Early Child Development and Academic Assistance Act, these requirements were amended to mandate that each district and school develop comprehensive five-year plans with annual updates to outline the district and school improvement plans. The components of the plans were identified and staff development was recognized as essential to support the implementation of the strategies of the plan.

In 1998 the Education Accountability Act (EAA) required that districts establish/modify accountability systems that reinforce the state accountability system and build on the district and school activities and plans already required by law.

As other legislation has been enacted, applicable portions of the legislation have been included in the planning process. For example, the School-To-Work Transition Act of 1994 and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2000 mandated additional planning requirements, which now are a part of school/district plans.

Throughout the implementation of the legislative mandates, the current best planning practices/processes have guided the development of district and school plans. Initially, the Cambridge Model or a modified variation was the predominant process utilized by districts and schools. More recently the Baldrige Model, Bernhardt Portfolio Model, and the Delehant Planning Process are beginning to have greater and more meaningful use. Over time the State Department of Education (SDE) has consistently provided technical assistance as well as developed model processes and/or working guides to facilitate the implementation of the legislative mandates.

The SDE, with the assistance of national planning expert Ann Delehant, developed a model revision process for school renewal plans to meet the requirements of the EAA's School

Retraining Funds Program. The EAA mandates that retraining schools rated unsatisfactory or below average must revise their school renewal plans to meet the criteria on high standards and effective activities.

Committee Work

The Planning and Support Section of the Office of School Quality is charged with managing the implementation of these various legislative planning requirements for districts and schools. Recognizing that significant changes are occurring in education, especially with regard to planning as it relates to accountability at the state and federal levels, the Planning and Support Section convened an advisory committee of district strategic planning coordinators to assist in updating the planning expectations.

Deep appreciation is extended to the advisory committee members listed below.

Ann Delehant, Facilitator
Barbara Hess
Beth Purvis
Cathy Skelley
Claudia Radeke
Cleo Richardson
Diane Wingate
Gwen Dixon-Coe

Herb Tyler
Jane Brailsford
Jason McCreary
Joan Grimmett
John Sullivan
Joyce Buxton
Judy Dellicolli
Judy Ford

Julie Keadle
Martha Vincent
Mary Babb
Nancy Ford
Richard Inabinet
Roy Stehle
Sylvia Kelly-Stone
Yvonne Barnes

The committee chose to develop a “model process” for Act 135/EAA planning requirements that built upon the process that had been developed for schools eligible for retraining grants. With the assistance of Ann Delehant, the committee prepared a model planning process that is available for use by districts and schools in the development of new five-year plans. Plans are due by April 30, 2005.

Although no particular planning model is mandated, the model process draws on the strengths of the various models listed above. The model process will meet all legislative requirements, and at the same time consolidate five district plans into one plan. The plans being consolidated at this time are the Act 135/EAA plan, Title II plan, PDSI plan, K–5 and 6–8 Enhancement plan, and the technology plan. The format, process/procedures, and structure of the district and school plans are similar.

The committee identified the essential state planning components in its amendments to Regulation 43-261, District and School Planning. The amendments were approved by the State Board of Education in early 2004 and were submitted to the legislature for approval. The amended regulation became effective on June 25, 2004. All district strategic planning coordinators were apprised of the committee’s work and were afforded the opportunity to provide input.

During the committee’s work, various issues and concerns were discussed and the following parameters were set:

1. The plan’s needs assessment process will draw heavily from student performance as described by the report card accountability system.
2. The process and structure of the plans will align with the SDE’s strategic aims.

3. Some components or procedures consistent with best planning practices will be optional while all legislative requirements are addressed in the model process.
4. When appropriate, legislative mandates are addressed in an assurance format in lieu of descriptive statements or narratives.
5. The planning process will prioritize and focus on strategic change initiatives and not represent all or ongoing district and school practices.
6. Any processes or templates developed will be as simple and flexible as possible.
7. The committee incorporated the revised *Standards for Staff Development*, developed by the National Staff Development Council, to support the implementation of the plan.
8. Goals will be written based on report card categories. Subgroups as identified by adequate yearly progress (AYP) will be addressed as part of the needs assessment. Based on gap analysis, strategies may focus on subgroup performance or other areas of identified needs.
9. Interim performance goals may be represented through a written statement or reflected in the overall measures as annual data targets, which include a baseline figure along with yearly projections of improvement over time.
10. Integrating technology into the curriculum, parent involvement, academic assistance, staff development, and innovation will be mandated strategies/activities/goals. Other components of Act 135 will be monitored through assurances included in the model planning process.
11. Based on the district/school needs assessment, the district/school will provide high quality, scientifically-based professional development that has been shown to increase student academic achievement in compliance with Title II, Part A.
12. The implementation of the plan must be monitored. District strategic plans will be monitored through action steps and timelines. The school plans will be monitored through process and outcome indicators.

Issues to Consider

A major advantage of strategic planning is that it provides an opportunity for a system to align resources and initiatives. Many of the processes used for the district strategic planning process are similar to the steps taken for school renewal planning. This process is designed to be ongoing and active. If the strategic planning process is only completed because it is a “requirement,” it will not serve the district. It will be most productive if the process actually establishes goals that guide the work of each school and each staff member.

As the committee members began their work, they identified fourteen separate plans that were required to meet state and federal mandates. As of October 2004, five of the fourteen plans have been consolidated into this strategic planning process. Many of the requirements of the five plans will now be managed through a series of assurances included in the model planning process. It is important to understand the context of the planning processes with No Child Left Behind and the state-issued report cards guiding alignment between state, district, and school plans. The State Department of Education has identified six strategic aims in the development of the state plan. They are the following.

- High Student Achievement
- Teacher Quality

- Early Childhood Education
- Parental and Community Partnerships
- Safe and Healthy Schools
- Education Leadership

These aims have been organized into the three required areas of the model planning process to accommodate federal requirements of No Child Left Behind. Goals must be written in the following key areas.

- Student Achievement
- Teacher/Administrator Quality
- School Climate (including School Environment, Parent Involvement, Safe and Healthy Schools, etc.)

In addition to these three key areas, each school/district may identify local areas of high need that it chooses to include in the strategic plan.

Each of the state and federal planning processes and state allocations for funding are represented in these six strategic aims and the three required areas for strategic planning. In addition, block and competitive grants are also designed to support these aims. Chart 1 below provides a “snapshot” of the alignment of key programs and initiatives in the state of South Carolina. In the past, to qualify for funding for any of the state and federal programs listed below, a district was required to submit a separate plan for each program to receive the funding. It is the intention of this new model process to consolidate the planning and eliminate duplicative processes wherever possible.

It is expected that the strategic plan will provide the foundation for all plans that are developed by the district. Since the district strategic plan will now serve as the approved plan for Title II, Technology, K–5 and 6–8 Enhancement, PDSI, and Act 135/EAA, data on each of these programs must be included in the needs assessment. Other state and federal plans, whether they are competitive, block, or allocation grants, should align with the district strategic plan.

Chart 1: Alignment of State and District Plans

| SDE AIMS | GOAL AREAS FOR MODEL PLANNING PROCESS | STATE/FED PLANS/ ALLOCATIONS | BLOCK/ COMPETITIVE GRANTS (examples only) |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Student Achievement | <u>Student Achievement</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood | Title I, Title III, IDEA, Perkins, Innovative Programs, PDSI, | Even Start, Reading First, Early Reading, |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Early Childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Adult | K–5 and 6–8 Enhancement, Alternative Schools, Technology, Professional Development, Act 135/EAA | Math/Science, 21st Century, EdTech, First Steps |
| Teacher Quality | <u>Teacher/Administrator Quality</u> <input type="checkbox"/> No Child Left Behind (Title II, Part A Requirements) <input type="checkbox"/> State Requirements | Title II, PDSI, K–5 and 6–8 Enhancement, Technology, Professional Development | E-Rate |
| Leadership | | | |
| Safe and Healthy Schools | <u>School Climate</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent and Community Collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Safe and Healthy Schools | Title I, Act 135/EAA, Safe and Drug Free, Technology, Professional Development | Service Learning, 21st Century |
| Parental and Community Partnerships | | | |
| | <u>Other Goals Identified by the District</u> | | |

Throughout this process many critical issues have been identified as fundamental to the planning process. Act 135/EAA requires the development of a collaborative planning process with involvement of key stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members. Evidence of active participation is fundamental to the plan.

Planning requires an officially designated team with specific responsibilities for leadership to guide the entire planning process. Acceptable strategic planning processes to develop these elements include the maximum involvement of stakeholders (parents, teachers, community members, administrators, and, for school plans, the school improvement council); a comprehensive structure to develop consensus building; and the identification of strategic initiatives.

The resulting plan focuses on continuous school improvement and maximized student potential. The expectation is that districts/schools will develop a continuous improvement five-year planning process with annual updates. The annual district update must be submitted to SDE, and school renewal plans must be submitted annually to the district office for review by the district board of trustees. It is not expected that the district strategic plan or the school renewal plans include every initiative that is being planned; however, the plans are to include the critical elements deemed necessary to meet school, district, and state goals and targets.

An outline of the steps of the model process is included in this document. It includes

- details on the in-depth needs assessment prior to goal setting,
- the development of the plan with sample templates,
- ideas regarding the implementation of the plan, and
- methods to monitor the implementation of the strategies and activities/action plans to impact student achievement.

The model process ensures that key components (including AYP details, AYP subgroups, attendance, graduation rates, teacher qualifications, percentage of students taking the tests, and best practices) are incorporated into the plan. The needs assessment and strategies reflect No Child Left Behind and AYP requirements as well as state report card components. Annual

updates outlining efforts to meet AYP and SDE/NCLB program requirements are part of the model process.

Districts and schools are urged to follow the SDE's model planning process, although no single planning format is required for district or school plans. Regardless of the planning process used, state planning requirements as outlined in Regulation 43-261 must be satisfied.

Schools that use the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process may substitute the SACS plan for the school renewal plan if the continuous improvement process employed to meet SACS accreditation requirements satisfies the state expectations as outlined in Regulation 43-261. A school electing to use the SDE model planning process will meet the continuous improvement planning requirements of SACS. If all schools in a district are on the same five-year SACS cycle and all of the schools' SACS plans have been accepted by the SDE in lieu of school renewal plans, the district may request the same cycle for the district strategic plan, provided all state planning expectations are met (for additional information, see the Resources section of this document).

Some districts will begin with a comprehensive district needs assessment and the district strategic plan. Other systems may require schools to develop site-based needs assessments and school renewal plans prior to designing the district strategic plan as a culmination of the site plans. This is a question of alignment—does each school plan include the priorities set by the district OR does the district design its priorities based upon needs identified by the schools? It doesn't matter which comes first, the district plan or the school plan, both processes have been demonstrated to work. What is evident is that the needs assessment is fundamental to the process whether it begins at the school or at the district level.

A comprehensive needs assessment should be based upon multiple years of report card data as well as other data pertinent to the district/schools to identify trends and prioritize initiatives within the three goal areas. Using the needs assessment data, goals and action plans will be developed.

The committee recommended that a district develop a change plan: a strategic plan that focuses on data-driven priorities. While departments and individual programs might maintain action plans specific to their needs, it is recommended that the district plan represent the key initiatives that will generate change and achievement in the priority areas (goal areas for strategic plan) rather than reporting everything that gets done. The school renewal plans also were recommended to be change plans.

Timelines

New five-year plans are due to the State Department of Education by April 30, 2005. Planning should begin well in advance of this date to allow sufficient time for the development of a comprehensive needs assessment, goals based on the priority needs, and action plans to meet the goals, as well as time for review and approval by the district board of trustees.

Outline for District Strategic Plans and School Renewal Plans

The following ideas will serve as an outline for developing district and school plans. It may be modified and adapted to meet your local needs. Components noted with an asterisk (*) are required elements and must be included in the plan.

1. Cover Page*
2. Stakeholders*
3. Assurances*
4. Table of Contents*
5. Executive Summary of Needs Assessment Findings*
6. Mission, Vision, Values, and Beliefs
7. Performance Goals* (see template in the Resources section)
8. Action Plans* (see template)
 - ✓ Strategies
 - ✓ Actions/Activities
 - ✓ Timelines
 - ✓ Person Responsible
 - ✓ Estimated Cost
 - ✓ Funding Source
 - ✓ Measures of Success (“Indicators of Implementation” for school plans and “Completed,” “Continue,” “Modify,” or “Terminate” for district plans)
9. Appendices

Details on each of these elements will be included below. A Resources section containing definitions, examples, templates, SDE contacts for programs, and other resource materials is located at the end of the document. Rubrics for evaluating district strategic plans and school renewal plans are future planned additions to the Resources section.

1. COVER PAGE FOR DISTRICT PLANS (Mandated Component)

DISTRICT INFORMATION AND REQUIRED SIGNATURES

SCHOOL DISTRICT

STRATEGIC/ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN FOR YEARS _____
STRATEGIC/ACCOUNTABILITY ANNUAL UPDATE FOR _____

Assurances

The district’s strategic/accountability plan, or annual update of the strategic/accountability plan, includes elements required by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 (Act 135) and the Education Accountability Act of 1998 (EAA) (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-18-1300 and 59-139-10 *et seq.* (Supp. 2004)). The signatures of the chairperson of the board of trustees, the superintendent, and the district strategic planning coordinator are affirmation of active participation of key stakeholders and alignment with Act 135 and EAA requirements.

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

SUPERINTENDENT

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

TITLE II COORDINATOR

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

DISTRICT PLANNING COORDINATOR

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: () _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. COVER PAGE FOR SCHOOL PLANS (Mandated Component)
SCHOOL INFORMATION AND REQUIRED SIGNATURES

_____ **SCHOOL**
 _____ **SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SCHOOL RENEWAL PLAN FOR YEARS _____
SCHOOL RENEWAL ANNUAL UPDATE FOR _____

Assurances

The school renewal plan, or annual update of the school renewal plan, includes elements required by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 (Act 135) and the Education Accountability Act of 1998 (EAA) (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-18-1300 and 59-139-10 *et seq.* (Supp. 2004)). The signatures of the chairperson of the board of trustees, the superintendent, the principal, and the chairperson of the school improvement council are affirmation of active participation of key stakeholders and alignment with Act 135 and EAA requirements.

CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

SUPERINTENDENT

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

CHAIRPERSON, SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

PRINCIPAL

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | |
| PRINTED NAME | SIGNATURE | DATE |

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: () _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

2. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT FOR DISTRICT PLANS (Mandated Component)

List the names of persons who were involved in the development of the district strategic plan. A participant for each numbered category is required.

- | <i>POSITION</i> | <i>NAME</i> |
|---|-------------|
| 1. SUPERINTENDENT _____ | |
| 2. PRINCIPAL _____ | |
| 3. TEACHER _____ | |
| 4. PARENT/GUARDIAN _____ | |
| 5. COMMUNITY MEMBER _____ | |
| 6. PRIVATE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE(S) _____ (Title II requirement) | |
| 7. DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR _____ (Title II requirement) | |
| 8. PARAPROFESSIONAL(S) _____ (Title II requirement) | |
| 9. OTHERS* (May include school board members, administrators, School Improvement Council members, students, PTO members, agency representatives, university partners, etc.) | |

| <i>POSITION</i> | <i>NAME</i> |
|-----------------|-------------|
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |

***REMINDER:** If state or federal grant applications require representation by other stakeholder groups, it is appropriate to include additional stakeholders to meet those requirements and to ensure that the plans are aligned.

2. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT FOR SCHOOL PLANS (Mandated Component)

List the name of persons who were involved in the development of the school renewal plan. A participant for each numbered category is required.

- | <i>POSITION</i> | <i>NAME</i> |
|---|-------------|
| 1. PRINCIPAL _____ | |
| 2. TEACHER _____ | |
| 3. PARENT/GUARDIAN _____ | |
| 4. COMMUNITY MEMBER _____ | |
| 5. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL _____ | |
| 6. OTHERS* (May include school board members, administrators, School Improvement Council members, students, PTO members, agency representatives, university partners, etc.) | |

| <i>POSITION</i> | <i>NAME</i> |
|-----------------|-------------|
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |

***REMINDER:** If state or federal grant applications require representation by other stakeholder groups, it is appropriate to include additional stakeholders to meet those requirements and to ensure that the plans are aligned.

3. ASSURANCES (Mandated Component)

Act 135 and other laws and Department initiatives required that certain programs be addressed in district and school plans, either as goals/strategies/activities or as separate program descriptions. The strategic planning advisory committee recommended that some programs be embedded in the plan, that some become assurances only, and that some be eliminated.

Programs to be embedded in the plan and referenced in an assurance with a representative page number and the number of a representative goal, strategy, or activity include the following.

- Academic Assistance, Pre K–3**
- Academic Assistance, 4–12**
- Parent Involvement**
- Staff Development**
- Technology**
- Innovation**

Program descriptors that will be part of the assurance checklist include those listed below.

- Recruitment**
- Collaboration**
- Developmental Screening**
- Half-Day Child Development**
- Best Practices in Grades K–3**
- Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for PreK–3**
- Parenting and Family Literacy**
- Coordination of Act 135 Initiatives with Other Federal, State, and District Programs**
- School-To-Work**

These two program descriptors need not be included in the plan.

- Goals 2000 Planning/Implementation Grants (no longer funded)**
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (covered in Title III plan)**

The assurance section of the plan for Act 135, therefore, will look like the following.

Act 135 Assurances for District and School Plans

Assurances, checked and signed by the district superintendent and the principal (for school plans), attest that the district and schools comply with all applicable Act 135 requirements.

_____ **Academic Assistance, PreK–3** The district/school makes special efforts to assist children in PreK–3 who demonstrate a need for extra or alternative instructional attention (e.g., after-school homework help centers, individual tutoring, and group remediation). Provide a good example of academic assistance services for PreK–3 by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____.

_____ **Academic Assistance, Grades 4–12** The district/school makes special efforts to assist children in grades 4–12 who demonstrate a need for extra or alternative instructional attention (e.g., after-school homework help centers, individual tutoring, and group

remediation). Provide a good example of academic assistance services for grades 4–12 by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____.

_____ **Parent Involvement** The district/school encourages and assists parents in becoming more involved in their children’s education. Some examples of parent involvement initiatives include making special efforts to meet with parents at times more convenient for them, designating space in schools for parents to access educational resource materials, including parent involvement expectations as part of the principal’s and superintendent’s evaluations, and providing parents with information pertaining to expectations held for them by the school system, such as ensuring attendance and punctuality of their children. Provide a good example of parent involvement by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____.

_____ **Staff Development** The district/school provides staff development training for teachers and administrators in the teaching techniques and strategies needed to implement the district/school plan for the improvement of student academic performance. The staff development program reflects requirements of Act 135, the EAA, and the National Staff Development Council’s revised *Standards for Staff Development*. Provide a good example of staff development by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____.

_____ **Technology** The district/school integrates technology into professional development, curriculum development, and classroom instruction to improve teaching and learning. Provide a good example of the use of technology by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____. (additional technology assurances for **districts** follow the Act 135 assurances)

_____ **Innovation** The district/school uses innovation funds for innovative activities to improve student learning and accelerate the performance of all students. Provide a good example of the use of innovation funds by referencing a page number of the plan _____ along with the number of the goal_____, strategy_____, or activity_____.

_____ **Recruitment** The district/school makes special efforts to **recruit** and give **priority** in parenting and family literacy activities to **parents** of at-risk 0–5 year olds. The recruitment program is not grade specific, but normally would be most appropriate for **parents** of children at the primary and elementary school levels and below, and for secondary school students who are **parents**.

_____ **Collaboration** The district/school (regardless of the grades served) collaborates with health and human services agencies (e.g., county health departments, social services departments, mental health departments, First Steps, and the family court system).

_____ **Developmental Screening** The district/school ensures that the young child receives all services necessary for growth and development. Instruments are used to assess physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive developmental levels. This program

normally is appropriate at primary and elementary schools, although screening efforts could take place at any location.

_____ **Half-Day Child Development** The district/school provides half-day child development programs for **four-year-olds** (some districts fund full-day programs). The programs usually function at primary and elementary schools, although they may be housed at locations with other grade levels or completely separate from schools.

_____ **Best Practices in Grades K–3** The district/school provides in grades K–3 curricular and instructional approaches that are known to be effective in the K–3 setting.

_____ **Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for PreK–3** The district/school ensures that the scope and sequence of the curriculum for PreK–3 are appropriate for the maturation levels of students. Instructional practices accommodate individual differences in maturation level and take into account the student's social and cultural context.

_____ **Parenting and Family Literacy** The district/school provides parenting activities and opportunities for parents of at-risk 0–5 year olds to improve their educational level. This program is not grade specific, but generally is most appropriate for parents of children at the primary and elementary school levels and below, and for secondary school students who are parents. Some districts operate the program at various schools, an early childhood development center, or some other location, while other districts operate the program through home visits.

_____ **Coordination of Act 135 Initiatives with Other Federal, State, and District Programs** The district/school ensures as much program effectiveness as possible by developing a districtwide/schoolwide coordinated effort among all programs and funding. Act 135 initiatives are coordinated with programs such as Head Start, First Steps, Title I, and programs for students with disabilities.

_____ **The School-to-Work Transition Act of 1994 (STW)** The district/school provides required STW programs for grades 6–12, and STW concepts are a part of the developmentally appropriate curriculum for K–12.

 Superintendent’s Printed Name
 (for district and school plans)

 Superintendent’s Signature

 Date

 Principal’s Printed Name
 (for school plans)

 Principal’s Signature

 Date

Other District Assurances

Technology Assurances for Districts

Successful technology plans align the overall education service improvement objectives with the following five criteria. To qualify as an approved Technology Plan for a Universal Service Program discount, the plan must meet these criteria. It is critical that technology planning not be treated as a separate exercise dealing primarily with hardware and telecommunications infrastructure. There must be connections between the proposed physical infrastructure of the information technology and the plan for professional development, curriculum reform, and service improvements.

_____ The plan establishes clear goals and a realistic strategy for using telecommunications and information technology to improve education or library services.

_____ The plan has a professional development strategy to ensure that staff know how to use the new technologies to improve education.

_____ The plan includes an assessment of the telecommunications services, hardware, software, and other services that will be needed to improve education.

_____ The plan provides for a sufficient budget to acquire and maintain the hardware, software, professional development and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy for improved education.

_____ The plan includes an evaluation process that enables the district and its schools to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new development and opportunities as they arise.

 Superintendent's Printed Name
 (for district plans)

 Superintendent's Signature

 Date

Title II Teacher/Administrator Quality Assurances for Districts

Professional Development is a key component of the teacher quality initiative mandated by NCLB and the SDE Office of Teacher Quality. Its purpose is to improve student achievement through continuous high quality learning opportunities for educators that are embedded in their job responsibilities.

In order for this to happen, districts must have systems in place that

- assure that all teachers and administrators are appropriately certified for their positions as defined by the Office of Teacher Quality,
- assure that all core academic subject area teachers are highly qualified as defined by NCLB in the appropriate content and level by the end of the 2005-06 school year,

- allow educators to make full use of the revised SDE certificate renewal systems,
- assure that all Title I instructional paraprofessionals become highly qualified as defined by NCLB, and
- use the standards of the principal evaluation system as a foundation for planned, on-going professional improvement for current and potential administrators.

___ a. The school district will maintain records documenting compliance with program requirements and related to fiscal control and accounting of project funds, including *Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)* 80.42, for funds paid to the district under this grant for three years after completion of the project.

___ b. The school district will ensure that all policies, procedures, programs, and the administration of programs in the school district are consistent with the No Child Left Behind (NCLBA) of 2001, EDGAR (1969) and other applicable status, regulations, program plans, and applications.

___ c. The school district will submit records as necessary to enable the South Carolina Department of Education (SDE) to meet its responsibilities under the program and will maintain such records, provide such information, and afford access to the records as the SDE may find necessary to carry out its duties. The school district will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation conducted by state or federal agencies.

___ d. The school district agrees to target Title II teacher quality funds to schools that have the lowest population of highly qualified teachers or have the largest average class size or are identified for school improvement under the specification in Title I, section 1116(b)(1)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), “a local educational agency shall identify for school improvement any elementary school or secondary school served under this part that fails, for 2 consecutive years, to make adequate yearly progress as defined in the State’s plan under section 1111(b)(2).”

___ e. The school district agrees to comply with Title IX, section 9501 of the ESEA regarding participation by private school children and teachers.

___ f. This application is based on rigorous systematic and empirical methods.

___ g. The research cited is adequate to justify the general conclusions.

___ h. The data provides multiple investigations that ensure validity, reliability, and replicability.

___ i. The school district agrees to conduct a needs assessment with the involvement of teachers, including those teachers participating in programs under Title I, Part A of the NCLBA, and shall take into account the activities that need to be conducted in order to give teachers the means (including subject matter knowledge and teaching skills) to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state and local student academic achievement standards.

___ j. The school district agrees to conduct a needs assessment with the involvement of teachers, including those teachers participating in programs under Title I, Part A of the NCLBA, and shall take into account the activities that need to be conducted in order to give principals the instructional leadership skills to help teachers, to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state and local student academic achievement.

| | | |
|--|----------------------------|------|
| Superintendent's Printed Name (for district and school plans) | Superintendent's Signature | Date |
|--|----------------------------|------|

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| District Title II Coordinator | Coordinator's Signature | Date |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|

General Grant Assurances for Districts

As a duly authorized representative of _____ School District,

I certify that this applicant

___ A. Has the legal authority to apply for state assistance and the institutional, managerial, and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-state share of project costs) to ensure proper planning, management, and completion of the project described in this application.

___ B. Will give the State Department of Education (SDE) access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to this award and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or agency directives.

___ C. The applicant's accounting system must include sufficient internal controls, a clear audit trail, and written cost-allocation procedures as necessary. Financial management systems must be capable of distinguishing expenditures that are attributable to this grant from those that are not attributable to this grant. This system must be able to identify costs by programmatic year and by budget line item and to differentiate among direct, indirect, and administrative costs. In addition, the grantee must maintain adequate supporting documents for the expenditures (federal and nonfederal) and in-kind contributions, if any, that it makes under this grant. Costs must be shown in books or records (e.g., disbursements ledger, journal, payroll register) and must be supported by a source document such as a receipt, travel voucher, invoice, bill, or in-kind voucher.

___ D. Will approve all expenditures, document receipt of goods and services, and record payments on the applicant's accounting records prior to submission of reimbursement claims to the SDE for costs related to this grant.

___ E. Will initiate and complete work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval by the SDE.

___ F. Will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race,

color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or disability. The grantee will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants for employment and the employees are treated during the period of their employment without regard to their race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or disability.

___ G. Will comply with the Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 2-17-10 et seq. and § 8-13-100 et seq. (Supp. 2001)).

___ H. Will comply with the Drug Free Workplace Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 44-107-10 et seq. (Supp. 2001) if the amount of this award is \$50,000 or more.

___ I. Has read the guidelines and understands the requirements of the reporting documents. The applicant will initiate and complete work within the time frame of the approved plan. The applicant will provide quantitative data needed to demonstrate program effectiveness. Failure to comply with timely submission of reports may have an impact on future funding.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| Superintendent's Printed Name | Superintendent's Signature | Date |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------|

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| District Financial Officer | Financial Officer's Signature | Date |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|

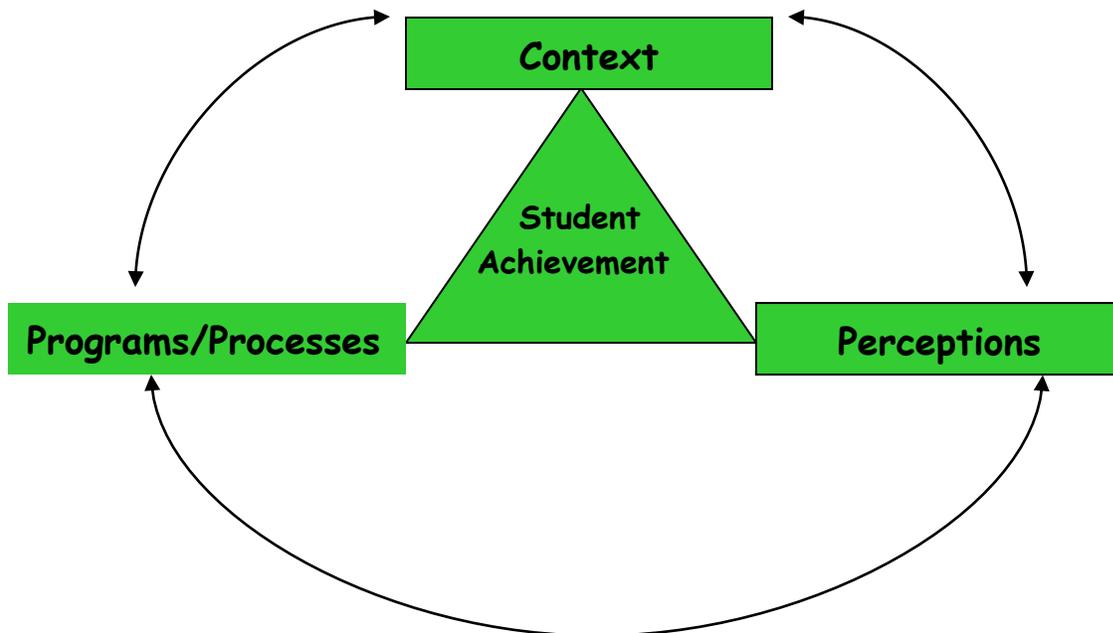
4. TABLE OF CONTENTS (Mandated Component)

Include a table of contents to ensure inclusion of all required elements.

5a. NEEDS ASSESSMENT (Mandated Component)

A comprehensive needs assessment is essential to excellent planning. The needs assessment is a required element of the district/school model planning process. It provides information that will ensure that the district/school develops accurate, focused, and data-driven goals and action steps. **The needs assessment should culminate in a summary of results that represents the district/school profile and directs the planning process.** All or parts of the information contained in the needs assessment will be used to generate reports for various audiences (i.e., teachers, parents, community leaders). Based on the needs assessment results, appropriate goals and action steps are developed that can reasonably be expected to lead to continuous improvement in student achievement. This section includes examples of a process to conduct a meaningful needs assessment.

The needs assessment helps us determine if what we are doing is working and assists us in identifying our needs (gap analysis). In conducting the needs assessment, information will need to be organized and analyzed in a variety of areas. These areas should include but are not limited to comprehensive data on student performance, context data about the students and the community served by the district/school, perceptions of the district's/school's stakeholders, and information about the district's/school's programs and processes. To find quality information, you must ask probing questions and use data to support your answer. Analyzing data from different sources reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the district/school. Together these measures—context, perceptions, student achievement, and analyses of programs and processes—can help us understand the school's impact on student achievement.



Data can be viewed as individual pieces or brought together to create a picture that shows how the district/school is currently performing. Data tell a story about the district/school in a single point in time known as a “snapshot” or over a period of time known as “moving pictures.” At the first level of analysis we look at current data in each area. At the second level of analysis we look

at data over time to define trends. At level three we examine subgroup performance currently and over time. At level four we look at other variables that impact student learning. By viewing data in various ways and by using multiple data sources and triangulation, we can determine how well the district/school is meeting the needs of all students.

Below are **examples** of the levels of analysis of data and questions each may address. These are only representative examples and are by no means all inclusive.

Level One:

How are students performing in this district/school this year? (all students, by grade, by subject)

Level Two:

How have students performed in this district/school over the past four years? (all students, by grade, by subject)

Level Three:

How are students performing by subgroup? (gender, race/ethnicity, disability, migrant, English proficiency, economic status)

Level Four:

Look at variables that have an impact on student performance.

What does the district/school profile reveal about your district/school?

While the report card accountability system provides data on context, student achievement, and perceptions, true data-driven decision making occurs only when educators apply their intrinsic knowledge of the **programs and processes** of the district/school to the data analysis. A template in the Resources section titled “Interaction of Programs and Student Performance” has been designed to assist districts and schools as they examine the impact of their current programs and processes. A rubric—titled “Staff Development Self-Assessment Rubric” and also located in the Resources section—allows a school to denote what best practices in job-embedded professional development currently are being implemented at the school and to identify areas where improvements are needed.

A Web-based planning and information tool for education, PlanIT Ed, is under construction on the SDE Web site to assist districts and schools in their data analysis. Located at <http://www.myschools.com/reports/planited>, the site is designed to aid districts and schools in making informed educational decisions. The user can select report card data by school (or district) that will automatically be displayed in a graph or chart. These visual representations of the data facilitate analysis by clearly showing progress or declines. A school’s data can be compared with that of another school, the state, or similar schools. By providing instant graphs and charts, the tool allows district/school planning teams to expend their efforts on analyzing the data. The tool provides examples of probing questions that planning teams should reflect upon

and answer to determine their true needs. The planning teams should consider where they are and where they want the district/school to be. The most critical gaps that impact on student performance should be addressed in the district strategic plan or school renewal plan.

After districts/schools assimilate, disaggregate, and interpret the data collected from the needs assessment, a summary of the findings should be included in the district/school plan. Conclusions drawn from the data will assist the stakeholders to define the vision, mission, and beliefs, if desired, and, most importantly, to establish goals and actions that are focused on priority areas of need.

**5b. Executive Summary of Needs Assessment Findings
(Mandated Component)**

6. MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND BELIEFS (Optional)

The section of the strategic plan describing beliefs, vision, and mission is suggested but not a required component. However, the inclusion of these components is generally accepted as essential to effective strategic planning. Assuming that the district chooses to include beliefs, vision, and mission statements, the following information is applicable. Planning requires an officially designated team with specific responsibilities for leadership to guide the entire planning process.

The strategic planning process should consider

- the involvement of key stakeholders (may include administrators/principals, parents/guardians, teachers, students, private school representative [for Title II requirements], community members, board of trustees members, School Improvement Council members, and others);
- a comprehensive structure to develop consensus building; and
- the identification of strategic initiatives resulting in continuous school improvement and maximized student potential.

It is recommended that if a district includes beliefs, vision, and mission, a committee should review these during the annual updates to ensure alignment with present practices. If organizational changes occur in a district/school, this area should be reviewed and adjustments made accordingly.

Mission

The mission of a district is a broad statement of the *unique purpose* for which the organization exists and the specific function that it performs (see examples below). Characteristics of a mission statement are the following.

1. Does the mission statement motivate and inspire?
2. Does the mission statement give clear purpose and direction to the district?
3. Could the administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community members readily use the mission statement to guide their own actions on behalf of the district?

Examples:

- The mission of _____ School District in partnership with the home and community is to assure the educational, social, emotional, and physical development of all students.
- The mission of _____ is to work together as a learning community, embracing academics, athletics, and the arts.
- The mission of The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center is to enhance the well-being of the people of Ohio, the nation, and world through research on foods, agriculture, family, and the environment.

Vision

Your vision is your ideal of what the district will achieve in five years. The vision describes the school/district you seek to become. In the development of the vision statement, districts should rely not only on an historical perspective but also on projections of future societal and cultural educational needs. The statement should reflect a sense of purpose, direction, and ideal future

conditions. A well-focused vision statement can become a specific agenda for direction and action.

Examples:

- We envision a district/school that values diversity.
- We envision a district that meets the maximum developmental needs of every child.
- The ____School District provides appropriate educational experiences that maximize success and achievement for every child.

Values/Beliefs

Values are the principles or beliefs that guide an organization's members as they pursue the organization's purpose.

Beliefs are statements of the organization's fundamental convictions, its values, and its character. It is important that the belief statements be clearly understood by the stakeholders and be free of professional jargon.

Activities used to develop beliefs/values may include the following.

1. guiding questions such as
 - What beliefs, values, ethics, and priorities do you hold for your organization?
 - What relationships are important to you?
 - How will you manage these relationships?
2. a district/school beliefs inventory
3. brainstorming and other group processes

Examples

We believe that

- Excellence is achievable and always worth the investment.
- Each individual has unlimited potential.
- All people have equal intrinsic worth.
- All people can learn.
- Students have a right to quality education.
- Education is the shared responsibility of the home, school, and community.

7. SMART GOALS (Mandated Component)

In accordance with the regulations for Act 135/EAA, each district must develop a strategic/accountability plan and each school must develop a school renewal plan. It is expected that each district/school will write goals in the following key areas:

- Student Achievement
- Teacher/Leadership Quality
- School Climate
- OPTIONAL: Others defined by the district or school

A sample template has been developed for the model planning process for district plans as well as one for school plans. Copies of the templates are included in the Resources section of this document, may be requested through e-mail from the Planning and Support Section staff listed in the Resources section, and are to be posted on the SDE Web site at <http://www.myscschools.com/planited>. In this section, we will review the terminology and provide examples for each of the components included on the template. Examples of performance goals, annual interim performance goals, data sources and overall measures for student achievement goals, a teacher/administrator quality goal(s), and a school climate goal(s) are included in the Resources section.

Performance Goal (desired result of student learning) (5-year goal)

The performance goal is a statement of the desired progress over five years. It is generally a *stretch* goal defining the target that will be achieved within the five years of the strategic plan. The performance goal is derived from the needs assessment.

The performance goal is written as a SMART goal answering the questions: WHO will do WHAT as measured HOW and BY WHEN.

SMART goals are

- S pecific, Data-Driven;
- M easurable and Observable;
- A ttainable, Realistic, Focused;
- R esults Oriented; and
- T imebound.

Student Achievement

Student achievement goals can be written in a variety of ways. For example, district goals might be written for grades K–2, 3–5, 6–8 and 9–12, or they might be written using the grade configurations of the schools in your district.

Goals for student achievement are written in terms of categories issued on the state report card. The AYP process may shift the focus of student achievement from the categories “below basic and basic” to “proficient and above.” Some districts and schools are beginning to set targets demonstrating “movement” in each of the report card categories: decreasing the number of students in “below basic” and “basic” and increasing the percentages of “proficient” and

“advanced.” As you identify the data from your needs assessment, you need to decide how to best present your goals. These are local decisions.

Example: Student Achievement Goal (other examples in the Resources section)

The percentage of our students in grades 6 through 8 who score basic and above in English/language arts as measured by the PACT ELA assessment will increase from 25% in 2004–05 to 65% in 2009–10.

Teacher/Administrator Quality

Teacher Quality

Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act places a major emphasis upon the importance of teacher quality in improving student achievement. To help ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, history, geography, and the arts [arts include art, dance, music, advanced fine arts, and speech and drama]) are highly qualified no later than the end of the 2005–06 school year, Title II, Part A provides funding to districts to recruit, retain, and develop high-quality teachers and principals.

In designing their teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development activities, districts must use scientifically based strategies that have been shown to increase student academic achievement. Districts are also required to develop annual, measurable objectives to ensure yearly progress in meeting the highly qualified challenge.

After completing the annual needs assessment, districts will write SMART goals to improve teacher quality, and ultimately, student achievement.

Examples: Teacher Quality Goal

The percentage of all core academic subject area teachers who are highly qualified as defined by NCLB in the appropriate content and level will increase from 70% in 2004–05 to 100% by the end of the 2005-06 school year and will remain at 100% through 2009–10.

The percentage of teachers receiving high quality, scientifically based professional development will increase from 75% in 2004–05 to 100% by 2009–10.

Administrator Quality

As districts review the capacity of the leadership skills of the administrators in the school/district they may use state programs, improvement initiatives, or evaluation tools or instruments of choice.

Example: Administrator Quality Goal

The percentage of principals receiving a rating of proficient or exemplary as measured by the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance will increase from 80% in 2004–05 to 100% by 2009–10.

School Climate Goals

School climate goals for districts and schools are also written as SMART goals. School climate strategies may be written in a variety of areas.

Below are some of the indicators in each area that may be identified through the needs assessment process to help determine goals/strategies.

- Safe and healthy schools
 - Decrease
 - ◆ Suspensions
 - ◆ Office referrals
 - ◆ Administrative hearings
 - ◆ Code of conduct violations
 - ◆ Tardiness
 - ◆ Failures due to absences
 - Increase
 - ◆ percentage positive responses on parent, teacher, and student surveys
 - ◆ Attendance
 - ◆ Service learning
 - ◆ Teacher recruitment/retention
 - ◆ Character education

- Parental Involvement and Community Collaboration (Act 135)
 - ◆ Joyce Epstein’s Six Types of Parent Involvement (see Resources section)
 - ◆ Comer’s School Development Program (see Resources section)

Example: School Climate Goal

The percentage of parents who attend parent/teacher conferences, parenting workshops, academic plan conferences, IEP meetings, open houses, PTO/APT meetings, will increase by 5% each year, from 45% in 2004–05 to 70% in 2009–10.

**Interim Performance Goal (desired result of student learning)
(1-year goal)**

The interim performance goal is the target goal that is set to be achieved in one year. It is also written as a SMART goal answering the questions WHO will do WHAT as measured HOW and BY WHEN. Interim performance goals may be a written statement or represented in the overall measures as projections of improvement over time.

Example: Interim Performance Goal

The percentage of our students in grades 7 and 8 who score basic and above in English/language arts as measured by the PACT ELA assessment will increase from 63% in 2004–05 to 69% in 2005–06.

Interim performance goals may be written statements or represented as intermediate values in the overall measures (for an example, see the “Overall Measures” section below).

Data Sources(s)

Data sources list the types of data that will be collected or examined to measure progress. While the PACT scores will be used to measure progress toward the student achievement performance

goals and the interim performance goals, other data may be examined to help a team determine appropriate strategies and actions. The types of data that will be reviewed to improve the quality of decisions may include quantitative data (including criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, ability (aptitude) tests, performance-based tests, K–2 readiness standards, attendance, referrals, subgroup performance, etc.) and qualitative data (perceptions, interviews, and surveys).

Example: Data Sources

PACT 7–8 English/language arts scores for all subgroups, participation rates, ELA benchmark tests, quarterly writing assessments, unit cumulative tests, attendance, disciplinary referrals

Overall Measures(s)

Overall measures provide details related to the performance goals and the annual interim performance goals. They report baseline data to ensure that readers are aware of the starting point and to provide details regarding the annual targets. The overall measures are updated on an annual basis to provide accuracy. As more data are reported by subgroups and by participation rates as well as performance, these details will be included in the overall measures.

Example: Overall Measures (School)

| | Baseline Average | Interim Goals | | | | Performance Goal | |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|----------|
| | 2001–2004 | 2005* | 2006* | 2007* | 2008* | 2009* | 2009-10* |
| Grade 7 | 72 | 76 | 80 | 84 | 88 | 92 | 96 |
| Grade 8 | 73 | 77 | 81 | 85 | 89 | 93 | 97 |

* Represents projections of improvement

Example: Overall Measures (District)

| | Baseline Average | Interim Goals | | | | Performance Goal | |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|----------|
| | 2001–2004 | 2005* | 2006* | 2007* | 2008* | 2009* | 2009-10* |
| Grade 7 | 70 | 74 | 78 | 82 | 86 | 90 | 94 |
| Grade 8 | 64 | 69 | 74 | 79 | 84 | 89 | 94 |

* Represents projections of improvement

8. ACTION PLANS (Mandated Component)

Action plans are designed to organize the steps that will be taken by the district/school to ensure the achievement of the goals. The committee developed a sample template that teams may use or modify. After a planning team identifies a performance goal and the interim performance goals, the team designs an action plan to meet the goal. The action plan provides details about the steps that will be taken, the timelines, the person responsible for the implementation of each of the steps, and the cost/funding sources. The team also determines how to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the actions.

The following components are included in the action plan.

Strategies

A strategy states the initiative that will be implemented to meet the goal. There are typically three to seven strategies for each goal. Strategies are generally written in direct response to issues that have been identified through the data analysis. Strategies might address a content area identified as weak during an analysis of the performance of a group on sub-tests (strands), or a strategy might be designed to address a subgroup identified by the disaggregation of data (a specific initiative to meet the needs of a group of students, such as female students in a particular subject area or students with a learning disability).

Technology is one of the plans that has been consolidated into the district strategic plan. In order to ensure that technology is integrated rather than considered as a separate initiative, technology is to be identified as a “strategy” to meet the student achievement goals and, as appropriate, other goals.

Example: Strategies

If the goal is

The percentage of students in grades 6 through 8 who score basic and above in English/language arts as measured by the PACT ELA assessment will increase from 63% in 2004–05 to 83% by 2009–10.

An interim goal might be

The percentage of students in grades 6 through 8 who score basic and above in English/language arts as measured by the PACT ELA assessment will increase from 63% in 2004–05 to 67% in 2005–06.

The strategies might include:

1. Writing Across the Curriculum (if the needs assessment data identified weak performance in writing)
2. Vocabulary development (if the needs assessment data identified weak performance in vocabulary)
3. Increased comprehension (based upon data, TMT, unit test, observations)
4. Working with students who have a learning disability (if the disaggregated data show an achievement gap for students with learning disabilities, the plan might include a targeted intervention to work with these students)

5. Integrating technology (for example, to demonstrate how technology will be used to enable students to write, edit, and revise)

Activities

Activities list the steps that need to be taken to fully implement the strategy. Activities might include professional development, scientifically based research, academic assistance, innovation initiatives, parent involvement, technology, etc.).

Strategy

Implement a research-based writing program

Activity

Research writing programs
 Attend conference on writing programs
 Present information to faculty
 Select process
 Schedule training
 Develop rubrics, prompts, and evaluation instruments
 Organize schedule to support collaboration
 Conduct quarterly writing assessments
 Create writing corner to display exemplary writing

A sample template is included in the Resources section, which provides an example of an action plan that includes activities, timelines, person responsible, estimated cost, funding source, and evaluation.

Timeline

The timeline should represent a “start date” and an “end date.” Many planning teams have used the word “ongoing” in their plan timeline or they state the start date as “September 05” and the end date as “May 06” (i.e., the entire school year). Unfortunately, with that kind of general reference to time, the action plan is difficult to manage or monitor. It is suggested that there be a reasonable reference to an actual start date and an estimated end date. This will enable the facilitator of the strategic plan to monitor the actual implementation of the plan.

If, for example, the activity is to design and deliver quarterly common assessments, four dates might be listed, with each occurring two weeks prior to the end of the marking period when the assessments will be given.

Person Responsible

The person responsible is the person who is the “champion” of each activity. It is preferred that names (Sam Smith, Principal) be used instead of only titles (Principal) or groups of people (for example, instead of Teachers, you will want to list a department chairperson or some other identified “go to” person who keeps track of the activity) even if the group ultimately is responsible for the implementation. Otherwise, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to monitor a group’s implementation of an activity.

Naming a person who is responsible is also a technique to engage more people in the planning and implementation process. People should not look at the plan and see that the only people who

are responsible are the superintendent, key district administrators, and principals. In order to extend ownership of the plan, share the assignments with staff throughout the central office and the schools.

Estimated Cost and Funding Source

This column provides the opportunity to identify the estimated cost of the activity. It is also critical to the planning process to identify the funding source. This will help the planning process link to the national, state, and local funding sources. Sometimes, strategic planners build a plan that is nothing more than a “wish list.” It is a much better plan to find or reallocate existing resources to fund the key priorities. There may be times when seeking funding for a new initiative can be a strategy or an activity in the plan.

Monitoring—MOST IMPORTANT!

The model planning process has several key components that create a dynamic, interrelated system. The overall quality of the planning process is most notably demonstrated in the nature of the monitoring component. The fundamental purpose of the plan is to create a climate of support for the change of adult behavior that then impacts positively on student performance. Through the monitoring component the plan's implementation manifests if continuous improvement is occurring. The regulation requires the identification of both process and outcome indicators to assess and guide the continuous improvement process. In order to meet these requirements, it is important to determine if strategies and activities are contributing to the achievement of the performance goals. To do this, it is important to monitor the implementation of the plan.

Monitoring at the District Level:

The template is set up to include a monitoring process. Teams must determine whether the activity was implemented and whether it was implemented in a timely manner. If not, the monitoring process allows teams to revisit and modify the strategy and activity/action plan.

The data gathered as you monitor the implementation of the plan will enable the planners to recommend whether the strategy or activity should be terminated/modified/continued.

Monitoring at the School Level:

It is important for school teams to conduct a more detailed evaluation of the strategies and actions. While not included on the district template, school teams will want to identify implementation “indicators” to help monitor progress of the strategies or activity/action steps. An example is provided below.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Strategy # 1: <u>Implement a research-based writing program</u></p> | |
|---|--|

| Activity | Indicators of Implementation |
|---|---|
| <p>Research writing programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Attend conference on writing programs ❑ Present information to faculty <p>Select process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Schedule training ❑ Develop rubrics, prompts, and evaluation instruments ❑ Organize schedule to support collaboration ❑ Conduct quarterly writing assessments ❑ Create writing corner to display exemplary writing | <p>Review of lesson plans</p> <p>Classroom observations</p> <p>Student writing portfolios</p> <p>Collaboration/analysis of student writing</p> <p>Exemplary writing samples</p> |