



Strategies for Evaluating Your School Improvement Process

School improvement is the process schools use to ensure that all students achieve at high levels. An effective school improvement planning process guides schools to develop a strategic and ongoing plan that focuses on quality education. A School Improvement Plan (SIP) is the primary vehicle for aligning, coordinating and prioritizing the work of the school and community in the context of raising student performance.

Evaluating Your School Advisory Council

School Advisory Councils (SAC) assist schools in preparing and evaluating their annual School Improvement Plans (SIP). The effectiveness of a SAC can be evaluated based on the following set of characteristics:

- **Representation**

State law requires all SACs to be composed of the principal, teachers, education support employees, students, parents, and business and community members. A majority of the SAC members must not be employed by the school district. The variety of stakeholders specified for SAC membership helps provide an appropriately balanced and broad-based approach to school improvement. State law also requires SACs to reflect the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school. Section 1001.452 Florida Statutes: Statutes: <http://www.flbsi.org/schoolimprove/linkforSACSection1.htm>

- **Clear Sense of Purpose**

Clearly stated objectives and task-oriented strategies give the council a sense of purpose and direction, which can lead to a sense of fulfillment at the end of the school year. Each council member needs to be aware of his or her responsibility. Orientation and training of new members are vital in order for everyone to participate actively and efficiently.

- **Action-Oriented Meetings**

In order to operate smoothly, SAC meetings need to be guided by well-conceived agendas and timelines. Decisions must be made and plans of action developed and implemented. Councils should meet regularly because the complex cycle of needs assessment, data analysis, goal identification, strategy identification and implementation, and monitoring of progress and evaluation cannot be accomplished without sufficient time.

- **Recognition of SAC Members**

Each council member should be encouraged to enjoy a personal sense of accomplishment and receive public recognition for offering his or her services. When people know they are appreciated, they are usually more willing to give of their time and volunteer to serve the school in this vital role.

- **Evaluation**

In addition to evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the objectives and strategies in the School Improvement Plan, effective councils continually evaluate and improve their

processes and procedures. Councils will ensure action-oriented meetings when they take the time to periodically evaluate them.

Evaluating Your School Improvement Process

The SIP should address student achievement goals and strategies based upon accurate, data-based analyses of student proficiency levels and other school performance data. Use the following elements to determine whether your SIP includes all necessary information:

- **Needs Assessment**

Following an analysis of school and student data, a needs assessment is developed to assist SACs in determining the gap between where the school is and where it wants to be. Needs assessment is an ongoing activity, tied to the school's vision and mission, and should drive school improvement planning. When evaluating the needs assessment process, ask the following questions:

- ✎ Were all stakeholders part of the decision making and data collection processes?
- ✎ What process was used to identify the highest priority school needs related to State and District goals?
- ✎ Was the data collection and analysis process efficient and affordable?
- ✎ Do data represent all stakeholder groups and subgroups?

- **Identification of Goals**

A goal is a general statement of intent that is usually long-term. A goal is not stated in measurable terms. When evaluating your goals, ask the following questions:

- ✎ Do the goals reflect the vision for the school and all students?
- ✎ Are the goals directly related to school priorities based on needs?
- ✎ If your school has been identified as a school with low student performance in one or more area(s), are there long and short term goals to increase student performance and meet proficiency levels?

(NOTE: Schools using the 2009-2010 State SIP template will not include goal statements on the online system.)

- **Identification of Objectives and Strategies**

An **objective** is measurable and is developed to directly address the specific problem areas identified in the needs assessment data. The characteristics of a measurable objective include: sharply defined, with no extraneous information; measurable educational outcomes rather than processes; and written to be accomplished within a defined time period. A **strategy** identifies the actions to be taken in order to achieve an objective. When evaluating the identification of objectives and strategies, ask the following questions:

- ✎ Do your objectives facilitate positive change for your school?
- ✎ Do the objectives include measurable expectations for all students?
- ✎ Are your objectives ambitious, yet achievable for the given timeframe?
- ✎ Do the strategies have a direct connection to the objectives?
- ✎ Are sufficient human/material resources allocated to implement strategies?
- ✎ Have you set timeframes and check points for strategy implementation?
- ✎ Who has been identified as being responsible for monitoring and evaluating each strategy?

Evaluating Your School Improvement Plan

The SIP should be a dynamic document that is reviewed often and revised as necessary throughout the school year. Use the following checklist for the ongoing evaluation of the plan:

- **Prior to Implementation**

- ✎ Does the plan address the State Education Goals? Section 1000.03 Florida Statutes: <http://www.flbsi.org/schoolimprove/linkforSACSection2.htm>
- ✎ Is the plan clear, simply stated and concise?
- ✎ Is the plan in alignment with the vision of the school?
- ✎ Does the plan address high priority needs?
- ✎ Does the plan represent an attempt to improve significantly the performance of all students?
- ✎ Is each objective written to reflect adequate progress that is substantive and measurable and allows the school room for growth?
- ✎ Are identified strategies (or action steps) for implementation based on research that identifies proven strategies?

- **During Implementation**

- ✎ Are strategies designed to achieve each measurable objective within the established timeline?
- ✎ Is the implementation being monitored and are “midcourse corrections” being identified as needed?
- ✎ Is the implementation process being documented?

- **Evaluating Completion of the Plan**

- ✎ Have all stakeholders been active participants in the entire school improvement process?
- ✎ Has sufficient progress been achieved?
- ✎ How will this year’s data be used to identify needs and objectives for next year’s plan?

Resources

Florida Department of Education

- *Planning and Evaluating Your School Improvement Process (The Guide)* assists with writing the SIP: (<http://www.flbsi.org/pdf/2008guide.pdf>); the *DART Model* assists with breaking down school assessment data: (http://www.flbsi.org/word/DART_2008_7-11.doc).
- Reporting Assurance of School Improvement Plan Approval and School Advisory Council Composition: <http://www.flbsi.org/SIPAssurance/login.aspx>
- BSI School Advisory Council Information: <http://www.flbsi.org/schoolimprove/schadvisorycouncils.htm>

Florida Districts – Sample SAC Information

- Palm Beach County: http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/SchoolImprovement/new_develop_sip.htm

- Duval County SAC handbook and sample SAC bylaws:
<http://www.duvalschools.org/reseval/SAC/default.asp>
- Broward County Leadership Training:
<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/strategicplanning/SAC/Parent-Involvement-Training.htm>
- Broward County SAC Bylaws:
http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/schoolimprove/school_advisory_council_bylaws.htm

School Improvement Planning

- Maryland School Improvement Planning
<http://mdk12.org/process/leading/index.html> Maryland provides an online process useful to any school improvement team.
- Mass Insight Education and Research Institute
<http://www.massinsight.org/initiatives/buildingblocks/topics.aspx> Building blocks link to examples and documents for school teams to use.
- SchoolsMovingUp: Tools for Continuous School Improvement
<http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/cs/wested/print/htdocs/tools.htm>
- Washington: School Improvement Planning – Process Guide
<http://www.k12.wa.us/SchoolImprovement/pubdocs/SIPGuide.pdf>

Team Building

- Wisconsin: Qualities of Effective Teams
<http://goal.learningpt.org/winss/sip/effective.htm>
- NCREL: Critical Issue: Building a Committed Team
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le200.htm>

Effective Meetings

- UCLA: Leading Effective Meetings Part I: Creating a Road Map for Success
http://www.smp.gseis.ucla.edu/Resources/EdNews/ednews_2006_06.html
- UCLA: Leading Effective Meetings Part II: Building Consensus and Handling Disruptive Behavior
http://www.smp.gseis.ucla.edu/Resources/EdNews/ednews_2006_08.html

Organizations

- Florida Association of School Advisory Councils (FL-SAC)
<http://florida-family.net/SAC/FLSAC.htm> FL-SAC is an independent statewide association that provides SAC basics, a toolbox, legislative links, and sample SAC forms. FL-SAC is not affiliated with the Florida Department of Education.

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