

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM BASICS

Functions of a School Leadership Team (SLT)

- Facilitates the involvement of the school community in the development of the School Improvement Plan
- Encourages, supports and creates opportunities for involvement from parents in the community
- Contributes to the design of the School Improvement Plan
- Monitors the effectiveness of the School Improvement Plan strategies

Duties of the School Leadership Team

Although the School Leadership Team is not directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the school, it is involved in a number of tasks that affect the operation of the school.

The School Leadership Team:

- Facilitates the development of the School Improvement Plan
- Monitors, assesses and amends the School Improvement Plan
- Advances policies and procedures that enhance achievement and meet educational, safety and parent involvement goals
- Facilitates communication within the professional learning community
- Builds the capacity of the school to address parent and staff concerns
- Builds the capacity of the school to improve in the following areas:
 - High Academic Achievement
 - Effective Educators
 - Adequate Resources and Facilities
 - Safe and Orderly Schools
 - World-Class Service
 - Strong Parent and Community Relations

Leadership Team Membership

Composition of staff membership:

-School Principal

-Members of the professional staff to include the following:

One Assistant Principal, Instructional Staff, Instructional Support Staff, Instructional Assistants

Composition of Parent Membership:

The parent membership must reflect the racial, geographical and socioeconomic status of students in that school. One parent must be the PTA/PTSA/PTO President or designee.

Frequency of Meetings

It is recommended that School Leadership Teams meet at least once a month. However, during the development of the School Improvement Plan teams and/or sub-committees may meet more frequently.

Election Process

The process for selecting members of the School Leadership Team is flexible. However, in order to secure the broadest cross section of the school and school community points of view, it is suggested that a communication is sent from the principal to parents and teachers outlining the duties and responsibilities of the School Leadership Team. In that same communication it is also recommended that suggestions by parents and teachers be made regarding individuals who would be appropriate candidates for team membership. Candidates must be willing to remain positive, objective and focused on the goal of improving teaching and learning. In addition they should be willing to devote the time, energy, and creativity needed to be an effective team member.

- **Parent Members:** All parent members of the School Leadership Team must be elected using secret ballots by parents of children enrolled in the school. The election should be conducted by the parent and teacher organization in the school or by the largest organization of parents formed for this purpose. If the election does not result in a representative group of parents, the principal may appoint additional parents to the team as needed.
- **Staff Members:** Representatives of assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel and teacher assistants must be elected by their respective groups by secret ballots.
- Since a significant portion of the SIP is developed before the school year begins, it is recommended that any anticipated vacancies on the team be filled in the spring.

Term of Service

The term of office is somewhat flexible. Each member will serve a minimum of one year and a maximum of three consecutive years. To ensure that there is some consistency of membership from year to year, it is suggested that approximately two-thirds of the composition of the team remain each year, while approximately one-third of the members rotate off the team. Therefore, some members may be elected to serve a one-year term, while others may be elected for a three-year term. Each team should develop a process for ensuring that there is continuity on the team from year-to-year, while still upholding the election guidelines. The election and attrition process should be outlined in the School Leadership Team by-laws and published by election time.

Note: While not mandatory, development of by-laws is recommended to provide a framework of operation for the team's efforts. Once developed these guidelines should be reviewed and amended as needed on an annual basis, usually in the spring.

Leadership Positions

As the instructional and organizational leader of the school, the principal is ultimately responsible for the effective implementation of the school improvement process. However, effective implementation by definition must include the sharing of responsibilities and decision-making with other members of the team. Below is a list of leadership positions and responsibilities that would be established for each School Leadership Team at the beginning of each school year. Each team should elect these positions. Any team member other than the school principal may serve as an officer on the School Leadership Team.

Chairperson:

- Meets regularly with principal to discuss school issues and develop meeting agenda.
Standing items on the agenda should include:
 - Reviews minutes from last meeting
 - Updates from any sub-committee meetings or assigned projects
 - Reviews (Quarterly) progress towards objectives set in SIP
 - Requests agenda items for next meeting
 - Establishes next meeting date
- Leads meetings and facilitates distribution of agenda to all team members of the School Leadership Team
- Keeps the team focused on the topic of discussion
- Reminds team members about meetings at least one week in advance
- Assists in completing reports due for the team
- Facilitates the public notification of meetings

Co-Chairperson:

- Runs the meeting when the chairperson is absent
- Assumes all responsibilities of chairperson in the event that the chairperson is unable to complete term

Recorder:

- Takes minutes at all meetings
- Distributes minutes no later than one week after the meeting
- Posts minutes of each School Leadership Team meeting in a designated place that is visible to parents and teachers
- Sends copies of minutes (within one week) to all School Leadership Team members
- Maintains copies of minutes and quarterly/annual reports, School Leadership Team Handbook, and other important documents

Timekeeper:

- Assists team in establishing the length of each meeting and/or the timeframe for each agenda item
- Monitors time throughout the meeting and reminds team of timeframe

Team Members:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Represent the interests of constituent group- not just their own
- Determine how to engage stakeholders in meaningful ways in school affairs
- Commit to working collaboratively with team
- Bring issues and concerns of constituent group to team meetings and communicates the activities and decisions made by the School Leadership Team
- Communicate information from the School Leadership Team to their constituent group

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Stakeholders selected by the principal evaluate the school using the Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The school evaluation (SEF) along with data and other sources of evidence and collaborative inquiry is used to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The School Improvement Plan contains the following components:

- I. Cover Sheet
- II. Signature Page
- III. School Profile, Beliefs and Mission Statement
 - The School Profile is essentially a snapshot of current school characteristics and demographics
 - The Profile should be completed in narrative form
 - The School Profile should include:
 - Demographics
 - Staff data
 - Grade structure
 - Student performance data/test scores
 - Stakeholder perspective

Beliefs and Mission Statement

It is not necessary to rewrite your current mission statement if your school already has one however, you may need to revise it. Revisit your mission statement by gathering fresh opinions and impressions of a representative group of stakeholders. Your mission statement should reflect the spirit of your school's beliefs while keeping in mind the district's vision.

To determine if your mission is appropriate, you must assess your beliefs. This can be done by letting the stakeholders develop their own set of beliefs.

- Once you have developed your listing of shared beliefs, they should be the driving force behind the mission statement
- The beliefs will be the foundation for your mission statement. Use these beliefs to determine if you should keep your mission statement as is, make minor adjustments, or rewrite it.
- The following questions should be considered when reviewing the mission statement:
 - Does the mission statement motivate and inspire?
 - Does the mission statement give a clear purpose and direction to the school?
 - Could the administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community members readily use the mission statement to guide their actions towards the school?

IV. **Needs Assessment**

- Data detailed within the Self Evaluation Form has replaced the Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Data may be found on the CMS Internet through the Data Dashboard
- Data for developing Action Plans may also be found on iSPARTA. To access iSPARTA:
 - From the CMS Intranet, select Web Applications
 - Log in to iSPARTA
 - Select year 2008-2009
 - Select school type, then school name
 - Select Principal Verification in left column
 - In drop-down menu under Principal Verification, all files prefaced by "SIP" will provide data for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09

V. **Developing the Action Plan**

Step five is the actual writing of your school's action plan. A template has been provided to guide schools in the development and presentation of plans. The following is a breakdown of the purpose of each component of the Action Plan template:

1. Outcome - A quantitative goal, focus, or priority of the school based upon evidences of strengths and needs detailed within the SEF and in correlation to Strategic Plan 2010 Goals.
2. Strategic Plan 2010 Goals - Check the Strategic Plan Goals that your Outcome addresses (double click on box, then click on check box)
3. School Quality Review Criteria - Check the SQR Rubric Criterion that your Outcome addresses (double click on box, then click on check box)
4. Strategies (numbered) - School-specific plans or activities that support the chosen Outcome. Strategies should impact student learning and results.
5. Tasks (bulleted) - Specific activities/jobs that support a strategy- these often must occur for the Strategy to be successful
6. Point Person - The title and, if possible, name of the person accountable for making sure tasks are on schedule and eventually accomplished.
7. Deliverables / Assessments - The evidence that the Strategy is working
 - Process evidence - Physical evidence (artifacts) that show the strategy or task has been put into motion or completed
 - Outcome evidence - Evidence that the strategy is working
Outcome evidence should answer questions such as:
What will success look like? Is the strategy working? How do we know?
8. Leadership Standard and Responsibilities - Leadership criterion completed by the principal only
9. Professional Development Focus - If applicable, the PD that is needed in order that a strategy/best practice be effectively implemented.

- PD may be offered by the district or provided in-house.
10. Parental Involvement - If applicable, the way in which parents will be involved in a strategy. The bullet indicates the funding source.
 11. Timeline- End Date / Check Date- The first date will be the completion date for the strategy. Bullets indicate check/monitor dates.

VI. **Developing Subplans**

Subplans are created to allow smaller groups within a school, such as grade levels or departments, to develop more specific strategies and tasks that support the school's Outcomes of Focus. The subplan template is slightly different from the main plan template. Those developing a subplan will need to include all components within the template except Leadership Standards.

VII. **Implementing the School Improvement Plan/Subplan and Documenting Results**

The Action Plan should be a living document that is continually reviewed and updated. As you reach your desired result in an area, the related action steps and objectives should be removed from the School Improvement Plan and replaced with amendments.

Implementation and Documentation has three parts:

1. Reviewing and Updating the School Improvement Plan

- School Progress Report
- School Quality Review
- Formative Assessments

2. Monitoring the School Improvement Plan

It is suggested that Leadership Teams develop a sub-committee for each outcome in the plan. It will be each sub-committee's charge to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy on its Outcome of Focus.

Responsibilities of the sub-committees are:

- Review Process and Outcome evidence
- Determine if the evidence reflects student learning
- Provide a statement to the School Leadership Team that answers the following questions:
 - What will success look like?
 - Is the strategy working?
 - How do we know the strategy is working **or**
 - How do we know the strategy is not working?

Please note that the sub-committees should not operate in isolation of the School Leadership Team. Instead, they should act as a fact-finding arm of the team by gathering information and bringing findings to the entire team for consideration and comparison with other data.

VIII. **Reporting the Results**

Reporting the results at the end of the year involves collecting evidence of the school's achievement utilizing a variety of data. This is accomplished by using the SIP End of Year **Annual Review** form. (SI website on the CMS Intranet) The **Annual Review**, which is to be completed in June, is a school's self-evaluation reflecting the results of the School Improvement Plan.

Data sources may include the following:

- EOG/EOC
- Summative Assessments
- School Audits
 - Safety
 - Financial
 - Inventory
- AYP
- Attendance
- Teacher Data
 - Retention
 - Attendance
 - High Quality
 - National Board Certification
 - Educational level
- Suspensions
- Surveys
- SQR Reviews

IX. **Presentation of the School Improvement Plan**

In order for any plan to be effective, it must have the full support of those involved in its implementation. Therefore, it is important that School Leadership Teams set specific times at the beginning of the year to formally communicate the goals, objectives, and action steps outlined in the School Improvement Plan to staff and families. It is recommended that visual aids including summaries of the plan and other handouts be prepared and distributed to ensure understanding of the plan. Though the nature and content of the presentation will vary from school to school, it is important to include the following items:

- The process for developing the School Improvement Plan including the Mission Statement and Beliefs
- A summary of the data analysis emphasizing information supporting targeted improvement areas
- The rationale for and the anticipated benefits of the plan
- The Action Plan, including identified goals, interventions, resources required, responsibilities for tasks, timelines, and monitoring and evaluation procedures.

North Carolina Senate Bill 20 requires that the plan be presented by the principal. However, the involvement of the School Leadership Team members in any discussion that follows is appropriate and may assist in achieving understanding by all stakeholders. After the presentation of the plan, some time for comment and review should be allowed. Stakeholder comments should be considered, and if necessary, parts of the plan may be modified to reflect such changes. Any changes to the plan should reflect the best interest for the achievement of Outcomes and must be supported by a consensus of the School Leadership Team.

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW

The School Quality Review (SQR) process is designed to enable the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System to develop a clear picture of the quality of education provided within its schools. This process will provide schools with a clear view of their strengths, areas for development, challenges, and successes.

The School Quality Review process will gauge the quality of schools based on the following criteria:

1. Achievement
2. Curriculum
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Leadership and Management
5. Learning Environment
6. Involvement of Parents and the Community

The findings are synthesized into a report which reflects an analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development, along with an evaluation of how well the school meets each of the above criteria. An overall evaluation of the quality of the school's work is also given to the reviewed school.

The first evaluation will serve as a baseline for subsequent reviews. The information gathered during reviews will be a key resource when creating/revising school improvement plans and ultimately provide a tool for school-level evaluations and rewards and sanctions.

Schools earning a score of Undeveloped will receive subsequent reviews on a yearly basis while those earning a rating of Proficient will receive an annual review that focuses on areas of development as noted in the previous review. Schools with scores of High Quality and Well-Developed will receive reviews on a less frequent basis.

School Leadership Team Glossary of Terms

ABC's – The North Carolina accountability program. The program is based on student growth as demonstrated by improved scale scores on EOG and EOC tests.

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) – A standard of student achievement used in the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Baseline Data – Data that reflects status toward goals before initiation of strategies and tasks.

Benchmark – Target under a goal in the School Improvement Plan.

Block Scheduling – A method of organizing instructional time so that students attend class for 90 minutes every other day (A-Day/B-Day) or Everyday (Double Blocking and 4 by 4). Double Blocking permits students to attend the same class for 90 minutes.

Continuous Improvement – A process, by which school activities are continually planned, acted upon, monitored, and changed for the purpose of achievement.

Desired Results – Impacts that are the result of the determination of goals and strategies/tasks with adjustments as needed to achieve them.

End of Course Test (EOC) – Comprehensive exams. EOCs are given at the completion of some high school level courses. In the middle school they are given to students who take Algebra I or Geometry.

End of Grade Test (EOG) – Comprehensive exams. EOGs are given at the completion of Language Arts (reading test), Math, Social Studies, or Science courses in grades three through eight. The reading, math, and science tests are mandated by the state. CMS mandates the Social Studies.

Exceptional Children (EC) – The term “children with disabilities” includes, without limitation, all children who, because of permanent or temporary mental, physical or emotional disabilities, need special education, are unable to have all their educational needs met in a regular class without special education and related services, or are unable to be adequately educated in the public schools. It includes those who are autistic, behaviorally-emotionally disabled, deaf-blind, hearing impaired, mentally disabled, multihandicapped, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, pregnant, specific learning disabled, speech-language impaired, traumatic brain injured and visually impaired. The term “preschool children with disabilities” includes, without limitation, all 3 and 4 year old children

and those 5 year old children who are ineligible for kindergarten and who because of permanent or temporary cognitive, communication, social/emotional and/or adaptive disabilities are unable to have all of their developmental needs met in a natural environment without special education and related services. Preschool children with disabilities become eligible for a free appropriate public education upon reaching their third birthday.

FOCUS schools – (Finding Opportunities; Creating Unparalleled Success).

These are the schools with high levels of student poverty that were formerly designated Equity Plus Schools within CMS. They will be staffed with teachers and administrators who have the same experience and degrees as the two-year average for teachers in the CMS Schools of Excellence and Distinction as defined by ABC rankings.

Free-Reduced Lunch (FR) – Free reduced priced meal available to families that are approved based on income or financial need.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – The term identifies those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms. An LEP student is a student whose first primary language is a language other than English, and whose English language ability is below superior.

Mission Statement – A statement that reflects the collective vision of the role that the school must assume in providing an education for all of its students.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – Federal legislation passed in January 2002 that assures all student groups are provided with effective instruction and subsequently assessed to insure achievement.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) – A comprehensive examination of a school's programs and practices that align instructional, organizational, and resourced allocation practices with desired standards of student achievement and school mission.

School Leadership Team (SLT) – A team composed of the principal, representatives of the assistant principal, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel and teachers assistants assigned to the school and parents of children enrolled in the school.

School Profile - Narrative of school that includes demographics for teachers, students and the community plus achievement data.

School Quality Review – A comprehensive evaluation of a school performed by a 3-person team which provides recommendations for improvement based upon a two day qualitative study that reviews student achievement, curriculum, leadership, instruction, and parental involvement and their impact on learning.

Self Evaluation Form (SEF) – A collaborative activity of self-evaluation among staff used to identify the strengths and weaknesses with the school’s effectiveness toward student learning. The results of this effort are used to inform the development of the school improvement plan, as well as to prepare for a school quality review.

Shared Beliefs – A grouping of the beliefs shared by stakeholders in a school that expresses the ideas that drive the decisions that are made and determines how the school will operate.

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) – This is a curriculum that has been implemented by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and should be taught statewide. The purpose of the NCSCOS is to guarantee that all students have equal access to the same basic curriculum.

Title I School – A school that receives federal Title I funds which are used to support instructional programs, parental involvement and professional development.