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**HEARTLAND AEA 11
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE GUIDE
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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE GUIDE PREFACE

Welcome to Heartland AEA's school improvement service guide. This guide is intended to describe the school improvement services that Heartland makes available to each school and school district within our boundaries.

Background

Five years ago, the Iowa Legislature passed legislation requiring that each of Iowa's 15 intermediate units (AEAs) be subject to accreditation by the state Department of Education. As a part of accreditation, AEAs are required to provide a basic set of services to all schools and school districts within their boundaries. These services include:

- Media services
- School technology services
- Services for diverse learners
- Services that promote multi-cultural gender-fair practices in schools
- School and community planning services
- Professional development services
- Leadership development services
- Curriculum, instruction and assessment services
- Management services

It was the intent of the Legislature and the Iowa Department of Education that AEA services be aligned with and supportive of schools' and districts' continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Moreover, it is a priority that AEAs help create efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equity in provision of services across Iowa.

AEAs Responsibility to Schools for School Improvement

During the same time window that the AEA accreditation process was being put in place, the accreditation process for schools and school districts was also revised. These changes are contained in chapter 281.12 of the Iowa Administrative Code. Specifically, Division VIII of Chapter 12 was significantly revised to include a focus on continuous improvement in schools. Also, a new level of accountability for student learning was built into these rules. For example, it is now required that districts report to their publics on student achievement with a depth and amount of detail that was not required before in Iowa. School accreditation now is influenced significantly by how well schools are implementing their school improvement processes and improving teaching and learning. This is a significant and important shift in thinking.

Throughout the process of developing AEA accreditation and revised school accreditation procedures, the Department of Education made great efforts to coordinate the content and focus of these two processes. One clear example of this coordination is found in the symbiotic relationship that is set up between Division VIII of the school accreditation rules (Chapter 12) and the AEA accreditation rules (Chapter 72). The school and community services standard reads:

72.4(2) The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning. The AEA assists schools and school districts in assessing needs of all students, developing collaborative relationships among community agencies, establishing shared direction, implementing actions to meet goals and reporting progress towards goals.

The opening of Division VIII of Chapter 12 reads

Area education agencies shall provide technical assistance as required by 281-72.4.

From these two sections of code, it is clear that there is an expectation that AEAs support schools and districts in their improvement planning that is required by Chapter 12 of the Iowa Administrative Code.

Specific School Improvement Supports

Though both the school and AEA rules describe a shared responsibility for continually improving schools, neither set of rules provide sufficient detail to articulate the framework for school improvement services to be developed. The Department of Education has provided a series of supports throughout the past 6 years to assist schools and AEAs, though these have all been offered as options rather than mandated directions that must be taken. In essence, each AEA and district have been left to their own professionalism to define school improvement in their own way, within the parameters provided by the Department and the rules. This flexibility has been appreciated and allows significant customization of programs based on local needs and situations. It has also created lack of clarity in communication regarding school improvement because different professionals define the pieces differently.

While this situation may be acceptable from district to district, it creates significant lack of clarity between districts and AEA's who are charged with serving them. Without clear definition of the school improvement services that are available to districts from the AEA and a description of exactly what these services contain, it is impossible to ensure and demonstrate with data that districts are receiving equitable, high quality services. As such, it is incumbent on the AEA:

1. to identify the component school improvement services that are available to all schools within an AEA;
2. to describe clearly a standard of quality for each school improvement service offered to districts;
3. to ensure that this basic set of school improvement services are available to all schools and districts within the AEA.

The process of defining these services is important and was done with great care and an eye to not limiting the flexibility inherent in the school improvement process. To this end, Heartland had adopted the generic school improvement process embodied in Chapter 281-12 of the Iowa Administrative Code. This framework is general, is the framework that all districts must work from, and allows significant customization of the pieces within any district's system. It should be noted at this point that the services described in this service guide are not intended to be exhaustive of the school improvement supports that Heartland will offer to constituent schools. Instead, these are intended to guide the provision of service to districts by providing a detailed framework from which quality services are appropriately provided within the context of each districts' unique needs.

To describe specific school improvement services, Heartland has taken an approach similar to the "Standards and Benchmarks" approach taken by schools to articulate expectations for their students. In this case, however, the standards represent specific school improvement services that are available to all districts and the benchmarks represent standards of quality that will govern service provision by AEA staff. In short, school persons can view the services listed in this preface identify needed services and review the associated chapters for indications of the quality components of these services to be delivered.

Heartlands Services and Benchmarks for Each Service Area

The services listed below denote standards, and benchmarks are indicated by Arabic numerals underneath each standard.

Service 1:

School Improvement Advisory Committee

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Assisting in making recommendations based on needs assessment and evaluation data regarding: major educational needs; student learning goals; and long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators addressing reading, math, and science. At least annually, the school improvement advisory committee recommends to the board:
2. Progress achieved with annual improvement goals regarding state indicators that address reading, math and science.
3. Progress achieved with other locally determined core indicators.
4. Annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, math, and science achievement.

Service 2:

Needs Assessment

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Identify and engage school representative and community stakeholders to participate in the district needs assessment process for school improvement planning.
2. Identify needs assessment questions to be answered.
3. Identify what data need to be collected (internal, external), most appropriate strategies for collecting it, and from whom.
4. Collect and summarize new and previous data.
5. Use the data to answer the needs assessment question(s) and document results.
6. Use strategies to prioritize quantitative and qualitative needs assessment data into major educational needs.

Service 3:

Long-Range Plans/Districtwide Goal Development and Alignment

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Use systematic strategies for analyzing situations contributing to major educational needs and linking this analysis to action planning.
2. Write challenging and attainable long range and annual improvement goals in reading, math, science and other areas.
3. Develop and revise content standards and benchmarks for reading, math, science and other areas for all grade levels.
4. Develop detailed action plans which are aligned with goals.

Service 4:*Action Planning*

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Identify specific actions necessary to accomplish district goals.
2. Sequence the actions into steps with a timeline.
3. Determine the persons responsible and necessary resources to complete the actions.
4. Communicate responsibilities to appropriate individuals.
5. Determine a method of monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

Service 5:*Implementation of Action Plans*

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts to facilitate the following:

1. Plans are implemented as written.
2. Data are collected regarding completion of action steps.
3. Action plans and progress toward goals are reviewed periodically and plans are modified as needed.
4. Data are collected regarding evidence of progress toward goals.

Service 6:*Comprehensive Evaluation of School Improvement*

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Review the district's goals, indicators of progress, questions to be answered and instruments to be used.
2. Plan and implement the monitoring and indicator data collection.
3. Summarize indicator data.
4. Determine and report goal status.
5. Utilize relevant data in next needs assessment.

NOTE: Formative evaluation is imbedded within the service steps of the planning and implementation phases described in previous chapters. Summative evaluation answers the question of whether the program was effective with definitive student outcome data. Summative evaluation is described in the steps above.

Service 7:*Assessment of Student Progress*

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. Develop assessment plans that:
 - Align with district standards and benchmarks
 - Contain technically adequate assessments
 - Contain multiple measures
 - Contain assessments with multiple formats and approaches
 - Define at least three performance levels
 - Comply with current state and federal guidelines

2. Collect and summarize student achievement trend line data for planning and continuous improvement.
3. Develop Annual Progress reports that:
 - Report data from multiple measures
 - Report results toward annual improvement goals
 - Report data from individual attendance centers
 - Report all required state indicator data regarding student achievement in reading, math, science and other areas in an understandable format
4. Increase student achievement.

Service 8:

Annual Progress Reporting

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the completion of a district's Annual Progress Report. The requirements for the report are contained in the Iowa Department of Education "APR Checklist." Requirements are available on the DE web site and are revised annually.

Overview to the Remainder of the Document

The remainder of this document details Heartland AEA's definition of school improvement from a "better practice" perspective. Each chapter presents an important component of the school improvement process and details the quality components that comprise that service. In many cases, the practices that comprise quality implementation of the component are described and the research base that underlies them are reviewed in the appendix associated with each chapter. These descriptions of the school improvement process were developed by Heartland professionals and will serve as the basis for Heartland's school improvement services to its constituent districts.

Chapter 1

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Service 1:

School Improvement Advisory Committee

HEARTLAND'S INTEGRATED DEFINITION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A school improvement advisory committee is made up of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and representatives from the local community. School boards appoint a school improvement advisory committee to make recommendations to the board. Based on the committee members' analysis of the needs assessment data, they make recommendations to the board on the following components: major educational needs; student learning goals; and long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators addressing reading, math, and science.

STEPS IN WORK COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Heartland personnel will have the knowledge, skills, and tools to assist school districts in facilitating the following:

1. *Assisting in making recommendations based on needs assessment and evaluation data regarding: major educational needs; student learning goals; and long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators addressing reading, math, and science.*

At least annually, the school improvement advisory committee recommends to the board:

2. *Progress achieved with annual improvement goals regarding state indicators that address reading, math and science.*
3. *Progress achieved with other locally determined core indicators.*
4. *Annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, math, and science achievement.*

Quality Components and Success Indicators for School Improvement Advisory Committee

Quality Component:

1. The community as a whole should be represented on the School Improvement Advisory Committee.

Success Indicators:

- 1a. The school improvement advisory committee is a microcosm of the local community. Membership reflects community diversity in terms of socio-economic status, racial and ethnic groups, gender, disability status, age, local businesses, and agencies. The group includes students, parents, teachers, administrators and representatives from the local community.

Data source(s): 1. *Heartland Data-collection Document on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*

2. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Quality Component:

2. The school improvement advisory committee has the responsibility to recommend the major focus and direction that the district is pursuing in educating students.

Success Indicators:

- 2a. The community has been involved in defining the major focus and direction that the district is pursuing in educating students.

Data source(s): 1. *Heartland Data-collection Document on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
2. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Quality Component:

3. The school improvement advisory committee should have the skills necessary to analyze data annually in order to recommend the major focus and direction that the district is pursuing in educating students.

Success Indicators:

- 3a. The advisory committee considers needs assessment data consisting of more than reading, mathematics, science, and early intervention (this is not required of nonpublic schools).
- 3b. The advisory committee's recommendations to the school board are data-based and aligned with needs assessment results.
- 3c. The advisory committee continuously examines a wide range of data in preparing its recommendations to the school board. (Longitudinal student data, empirical research, projected trends that have implications for student learning, other student achievement data, stakeholder input, etc.)

Data source(s): 1. *Heartland Data-collection Document on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
2. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Quality Component:

4. The school improvement advisory committee annually reports its findings in reading, math, science, and other areas to the board.

Success Indicators:

- 4a. The advisory committee succinctly reports its findings annually in all required areas as the basis for recommendations made to the school board.

Data source(s): 1. *Heartland Data-collection Document on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
2. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Quality Component:

5. Formally gather input from the community at least every 5 years regarding educational needs of students.

Success Indicator:

- 5a. In addition to ongoing input from the community, a formalized event or process should be completed every five years to gather data to be used in determining the major focus and direction that the district is pursuing in educating students.

Data source(s): 1. *Heartland Data-collection Document on Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
2. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Success Indicators:

- 2a. Audit and/or diagnostic level assessment questions are written.
- 2b. The model of needs assessment used to drive data analysis and evaluation is specified.
In schools, either a marketing model of needs assessment will be selected or a discrepancy model will be selected.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

3. Identify the target population for data collection on each question.

Success Indicators:

- 3a. The target population is identified for each assessment question.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

4. Determine the nature and amount of data that need to be collected in order to answer the questions.

Success Indicators:

- 4a. A data collection plan is written identifying what and how much data will be collected for each question.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

5. Data are collected, summarized and organized for use.

Success Indicators:

- 5a. A data collection plan is written identifying what and how much data will be collected for each question.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

6. Assessment results are used to answer the assessment questions.

Success Indicators:

- 6a. Needs assessment data are used to answer the assessment questions. The conclusions for each question are consistent with the data collected.
- 6b. Additional or clarifying questions may be developed based on the answers to the original questions.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

7. Analyzed and prioritized data are used to identify major educational needs.

Success Indicators:

- 7a. Strategies are identified to translate data into major educational needs.
- 7b. Data are prioritized using strategies

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Quality Component:

8. Document and communicate results.

Success Indicators:

- 8a. A needs assessment report is written and communicated to all appropriate stakeholders.

Data source(s): Needs assessment final report.

Success Indicator:

- 1a. The district/school seeks input from the community in the development and review of the district philosophy, beliefs, mission or vision of the district. The district/school documents show they have used community input to develop the shared beliefs that drive decision making.

Data source(s):

1. *Needs assessment final report.*
2. *Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
3. *Annual Progress Reports.*
4. *School Improvement Team Membership.*

Quality Component:

2. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in applying community information in the planning of district/school goals and school improvement initiatives.

Success Indicator

- 2a. The district/school uses community information in the development of student learning goals, long-range and annual improvement goals. The district/school documents indicate how community input has contributed to goals and school improvement planning

Data source(s):

1. *Long range goals.*
2. *Annual student learning goals.*
3. *Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.*
4. *Annual Progress Reports.*
5. *DE Accreditation Visit final report.*

GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Goals should be based upon both internal and external data and directly support current student needs. Goals should be written behaviorally to reflect what students need to know and do.

Quality Component

3. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in assuring student achievement goals are developed through the needs assessment process and revised through the evaluation process.

Success Indicator

- 3a. The district/school created interrelated long-range and annual improvement goals that directly support current student needs.

Data source(s):

1. *Needs assessment final report.*
2. *Comprehensive School Improvement Plans – needs assessment documentation and goals for learning and progress toward goals.*
3. *Annual Progress Reports.*

Quality Component

4. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in assuring that student achievement goals are developed using both internal and external data.

Success Indicator

- 4a. The district/school will review and update long-range goals based on data from both internal and external sources. All Heartland schools will have goals in reading math and science.

Data source(s):

1. *Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.*
2. *Annual Progress Report.*
3. *Long range and annual improvement goals.*
4. *Data sources used in developing long Range and annual improvement goals.*

Quality Component:

5. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that written action plans include all of the necessary elements for action planning.

Success Indicator:

- 5a. Written action plans describe the strategy to be implemented along with action steps, timelines, person(s) responsible, necessary resources, and data collection methods.

Data source(s): Review of written action plans.

Quality Component:

6. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that written action plans are specific and detailed.

Success Indicator:

- 6a. Action plans are written with sufficient detail so that they may be implemented without additional planning.

Data source(s): Review of written action plans.

Success Indicators:

- 2a. Written student achievement goals.
- 2b. Completed documentation of team meetings, including progress on prior commitments.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –
(Schmoker Model for Effective Team Meetings Log, appendix, p. 119.)

Quality Component:

3. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that actions are concrete, clear, specific and possible to implement. Successful implementation efforts should be limited in number (1-3 districtwide), but have specificity and clarity to all those who will be held accountable for carrying them out.

Success Indicators:

- 3a. Grade-specific action plans are present in an implementation plan.
- 3b. Teacher display of accomplished activities.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –
1. Action plans and implementation logs.
2. Walkthroughs/observations

Quality Component:

4. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that critical benchmarks and timelines are accomplished within the action plan. Each step of implementation needs to be coordinated and the accomplishment of short-term benchmarks documented for each step in the plan.

Success Indicators:

- 4a. Teacher and administrative teams that focus on meeting student achievement goals, collecting and analyzing student data, identifying strategies and recording the resulting impact on student achievement are in place. Decisions are made to continue with a strategy, modify or abandon, with a focus on short-term successes.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as – Teacher implementation logs.

Quality Component:

5. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that plans for monitoring and evaluating actions plans are explicit and have stated timelines. Explicit plans and timelines for formative evaluation, as well as criteria for the fidelity of the implementation, are stated. The plan would include specifics of how data will be collected and who will analyze and review it for evidence of progress toward meeting goals. Plans should be reviewed at least once a year. Administrative teams should monitor plans monthly.

Success Indicators:

- 5a. Timelines are stated in plans.
- 5b. Monitoring and evaluation tasks, dates and responsibilities are explicit in the

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as – Written action plans.

Quality Component:

6. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that effective teamwork is rooted in a concern with results. Collaborative teams will use an agenda for their collaboration. Collaborators regularly review the commitments they made the last time they were together, and what happened, as well as sharing student work as evidence of the effectiveness of the strategy.

Success Indicators:

- 6a. Use of meeting logs, agendas. Sections that reflect work undertaken on prior commitments made to implement strategies will be fully utilized.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –

1. Implementation logs, agendas.
2. Student work showing improvement.

Quality Component:

7. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that those responsible to implement action plans may also make data-based decisions to alter, abandon or continue action steps.

Success Indicators:

- 7a. Planning teams must have the responsibility to make any necessary alterations in action steps, timelines or resources, based on data.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –

1. Written plan to alter, abandon or continue action steps, in the short run, if data supports a change.
2. Carr & Harris action plan self-assessment tool.

Quality Component:

8. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring that leadership keeps everyone focused on improving student learning. Leadership sets expectations for providing evidence at frequent intervals that strategies being implemented are increasing student achievement.

Success Indicators:

- 8a. Evidence of implementation of action plans is reviewed at regular intervals throughout the implementation year by school leaders.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –

1. Minutes from meetings
2. Modification of action plans

- 8b. Collecting, disseminating, analyzing and discussing success stories about student achievement in the district and from outside the district.

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –

1. Minutes from staff and administrative meetings, memos, email, district newsletters, which document praise and recognition of goal accomplishments, for both individuals and groups.
2. Celebrations of progress for goal accomplishments and specific successes. Graphs and charts (similar to United Way thermometer) where teachers can readily view their progress.
3. Implementation data
4. Integrity/Fidelity data

Quality Component:

9. AEA staff will assist school/district staff in ensuring there is effective collaboration utilizing action research. Effective collaboration means that what educators engage in is carefully conducted experimentation with new practices and then assessing them for their impact on student learning and achievement.

Success Indicators:

- 9a. Teacher teams will engage in all 5 phases of schoolwide action research: Select a focus (goal), collect data (both internal and external), organize the data, analyze and interpret the data, and take action. (Calhoun, 1994)

Data Source(s): District determined documentation such as –

1. SAR Matrix (Calhoun, 1999).
2. Teacher implementation logs (Schmoker).
3. Smart goals (Schmoker, Conzemius & O'Neill)

- Results of programs and efforts on district annual and long range goals?
- Student's mastery of district standards and benchmarks?
- Advancement toward adequate yearly progress state goals for all subgroups?

What are the process oriented questions about?

- The impact of the program, instruction, plan, etc.?
- The alignment of assessment, curriculum, instruction and remedial services to district standards and benchmarks?
- Perceptions of students, parents, staff, or community?
- Processes of implementation, planning, etc.?
- Demographics of participation, group to be served, etc.?
- The effectiveness of our efforts in achieving intermediary and long range goals?

Data source(s): District evaluation plan and report, district APR.

2b. Determine what information is needed to answer those questions.

Data source(s): District evaluation plan.

2c. Specify the sources for the information.

Data source(s): District evaluation plan, CSIP goals and district APR.

2d. Determine evaluation activities.

Quality Component:

3. Develop or adopt evaluation instruments based on expected outcomes identified during planning.

Success Indicators:

3a. Specify the methods/instruments for collecting that information. The method or combination of methods selected is a function of three factors:

- Overall purpose of your evaluation,
- Information needs of your audience, and
- Practical constraints of the process of gathering and using the information.

Data source(s): District evaluation plan.

3b. Review the adequacy of the proposed data collection methods.

- Will the information to be collected provide a comprehensive, yet realistic picture of what is evaluated?
- Are the procedures legal and ethical (informed consent, confidentiality, fair and accurate, not censored by stakeholders)?
- Will the cost of any procedure be worthwhile, given the amount and kind of information it will provide?
- Does the data-collection plan make use of already existing data?
- Will the information collected be reliable? (Does the instrument/procedure yield consistent results?)
- Will the information collected be valid? (Is the instrument/procedure appropriate for what needs to be measured and decisions made? Does the measure present accurate, relevant, representative, and complete information?)

Data source(s): District evaluation plan.

Quality Component:

4. Implement the data collection plan.

Success Indicators:

- 4a. Identify persons responsible for ensuring each activity is completed.
- 4b. Establish the evaluation timeline.
- 4c. Estimate anticipated cost of evaluation activities.
- 4d. Determine how each evaluation activity is to be documented.

- 4e. Indicate how the data will be coded, organized, securely stored, and retrieved.
- 4f. Complete data collection and monitor the process of collecting the data.
Data source(s): District evaluation plan and final report.

Quality Component:

5. Analyze and interpret the data.

Success Indicators:

- 5a. Plan for data analysis and interpretation.
 - What methods of data analysis and interpretation are appropriate for the questions you're trying to answer, the information you're planning to collect, and the method you will use to collect the information?
 - What methods of data analysis and interpretation are most likely to be understood and to be credible to the audiences who will receive reports?
 - What are the expected standards or criteria to which the data will be compared?
 - Who should be involved in interpreting the results of data analysis?
Data source(s): District evaluation plan and final report.
- 5b. Organize the data collected.
 - Topical organization of data (by content area, by related area, by research questions, by standard, by district goals)
 - Physical organization of data (spreadsheets/databases, file folders, data boxes, notebooks)
Data source(s): District final report.
- 5c. Complete analysis for each question to be answered, disaggregating and synthesizing the data as needed.
Data source(s): District final report.
- 5d. Present the data analysis results.
 - Tables, charts, and/or graphs
 - Narrative summary statements
Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, and final report.

Quality Component:

6. Make decisions based on the data.

Success Indicators:

- 6a. Answer assessment questions by examining data analysis results and comparing them to previously identified standards and criteria.
Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, and final report.
- 6b. Discuss implications of these results.
Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, and final report.
- 6c. Make decisions about the data.
 - Revise/update curriculum, instruction and/or assessment
 - Revise/update school improvement plan
Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, and final report.

Quality Component:

7. Report data and associated decisions.

Success Indicators:

- 7a. Develop a systematic report to all stakeholders including the School Improvement Advisory Committee
 - A short "executive" summary for all stakeholders

- In-depth reports for working committees, task forces, administrators, etc.
Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, and final report.

Quality Component:

8. Determine relevant data to be used in the next needs assessment.

Success Indicators:

- 8a. Review previous needs assessment to determine questions that can be answered with existing evaluation data.
- 8b. Propose new areas for needs assessment questions based on current data.
- 8c. Draft portions of the next needs assessment report with relevant evaluation data.

Data source(s): District APR, executive summaries, evaluation report, and needs assessment report.

Success Indicators:

- 1a. The district's assessment plan meets all requirements as defined by the current DE checklists for evaluating plans.

Data source(s): Assessment plans.

Quality Component:

2. Assessments are aligned with standards and benchmarks. AEA staff will assist districts in using a process in which they systematically evaluate the level of alignment between their standards and benchmarks and their assessments.

Success Indicators:

- 2a. Schools will have documentation of their alignment process and decisions, including summary reports about their conclusions as to their alignment between a test and their standards and benchmarks.
- 2b. School reporting of assessment data will show links between tests and district standards/ benchmarks.

Data source(s): LEA Annual Progress Reports, and assessment plans.

Quality Component:

3. Assessments are high quality (reliable, valid and fair). AEA staff will assist districts in evaluating the technical adequacy of their assessments. Staff will provide guidance and assistance with methods for systematically determining the technical adequacy of the assessments used by districts, especially when assessments are used to make significant decisions.

Success Indicators:

- 3a. Schools will have documentation on file locally of technical adequacy data, including locally collected reliability data (when applicable), alignment data (see above), etc.

Data source(s): LEA assessment plan.

Quality Component:

4. Performance levels (expected levels of performance) are identified. AEA staff will provide districts with strategies and supports for establishing and evaluating performance levels for districtwide assessments.

Success Indicators:

- 4a. The district will have documentation on file locally describing the methods used to establish performance levels for tests.
- 4b. Any assessment results reported in district Annual Progress Reports include descriptions within the context of district established performance levels.

Data source(s): District Annual Progress Reports.

Success Indicators:

- 2a. The Annual Progress Report includes performance levels on all districtwide assessments in reading, mathematics, and science (Technical Assistance for Comprehensive School Improvement, July, 1999, p. 83).

Data Source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

3. Annual improvement goals based on at least one district-wide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. One annual improvement goal may address all areas, or individual annual improvement goals for each area may be identified. When a school or school district does not meet its annual improvement goals for one year, it shall include in its Annual Progress Report the actions it will take to meet annual improvement goals for the next school year (Iowa Administrative Code, 281.12, p.22).

Success Indicators:

- 3a. Annual improvement goal(s) describe a desired measurable annual improvement 281-IAC 12.8(1) "b"(4) Section 1111(b)(2) P.L. 103-384.
- 3b. Annual improvement goal(s) are based on data from at least one district-wide assessment 281-IAC 12.8(1)"b"(4) Section 1111(b)(2) P.L. 103-384.
- 3c. Annual Improvement goal(s) may be based on a specific subgroup and need not necessarily be based on an entire population. 281-IAC 12.8(1)"b"(4) USDE Non-Regulatory Guidance.
- 3d. There is at least one annual improvement goal for reading, science, and mathematics (separately or combined). However, grades 4, 8, and 11 do not each need a goal for each of the subjects. 281-IAC 12.8(1)"b"(3) & (4).
- 3e. Annual improvement goal(s) are directed toward achievement of long-range goals. 281-IAC 12.8(1)"b" (3) & (4).
- 3f. The district has determined which and how many data sources(s) (indicators) would be used to determine goal attainment. 281-IAC 12.8(1)"b"(4&5).
- 3g. Annual improvement goal(s) are based on disaggregated data.
- 3h. Annual improvement goal(s) address specific populations and needs identified through data analysis.
- 3i. Annual improvement goal(s) are assessed using measures that are reliable, valid, and fair to all students. (Technical Assistance Guide, 2000-01 Annual Progress Report p. 3&4)

Data Source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

4. Data on multiple assessments for reporting achievement for all students in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science (Iowa Administrative Code, 281.12, p.22).

Success Indicators:

- 4a. The Annual Progress Report contains districtwide multiple assessment data for reading, mathematics and science. 281-IAC 12.8(3)"b"(5). (Technical Assistance Guide, 2000-01 Annual Progress Report (APR) p. 3&4)
- 4b. Multiple assessments used to establish or monitor progress toward annual improvement goals must have three achievement levels and are reliable, valid; and the data can be disaggregated. 281-IAC 12.8(3)"b"(4). (Technical Assistance Guide, 2000-01 Annual Progress Report (APR) p. 3&4)
- 4c. The report to the community contains data from multiple measures at multiple grade levels.
- 4d. The report to the community contains multiple measure data that clearly connect to local standards.

Data Source: LEA district assessment plan and Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

5. Results by individual attendance centers, as appropriate, on the state indicators as stated in subrule 12.8(3) and any other locally determined factors or indicators. An attendance center, for reporting purposes, is a building that houses students in grade 4 or grade 8 or grade 11 (Iowa Administrative code, 281.12, p.22).

Success Indicators:

- 5a. The Annual Progress Report includes student achievement data on all attendance centers housing grades four, eight, or eleven (Technical Assistance for Comprehensive School Improvement, July, 1999, p. 84).

Data Source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

6. Progress with the use of technology as required by Iowa Code section 295.3. This requirement does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools (Iowa Administrative Code, 281.12, p.22).

Success Indicators:

- 6a. The Annual Progress Report clearly articulates the integration of technology throughout the progress report. (Technical Assistance for Comprehensive School Improvement, July, 1999, p. 84)

Data Source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

7. School districts are encouraged to provide information on the reading proficiency of kindergarten through grade 3 students by grade level. However, all school districts receiving early intervention block grant funds shall report to the department the progress toward achieving their early intervention goals (Iowa Administrative Code, 281.12, p. 22).

Success Indicators:

- 7a. The school district reports progress toward reducing class size to the state goal of 17 students per teacher of grades K-3 in basic skills instruction
- 7b. At a minimum, the school district biannually informs parents of their individual child's performance on diagnostic assessments in K-3. If appropriate, the school district informs parents of the actions (interventions) the school district will take to improve the child's reading skills and provides parents with strategies to enable the parents to improve their child's skills. (Technical Assistance for Comprehensive School Improvement, July, 1999, p. 85)

Data Source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Quality Component:

8. School districts report three years of data for the percentage of students proficient in Reading Comprehension and Math Total in grades 4, 8 (+Science) and 11 (Reading Comprehension, Math Concepts, Problem Solving and Science).

Success Indicators:

- 8a. Proficiency data is reported for the student population and any of the following subgroups with more than 10 students: Gender, low SES, students with disabilities, migrant students, ELL students.
- 8b. Local student achievement data is compared with state and national percentage of students proficient.

- 8c. Additional state indicator data reported: Dropout, post secondary, graduation rates, locally determined indicators, progress with early intervention goals.
- 8d. Report to the public if any school has been identified a School in Need of Improvement (SINI).

Data source: LEA Annual Progress Report.

Consensus decision-making occurs when decisions are made that best reflect the viewpoints of all involved and that all members agree to support. This requires that team members develop the ability to discuss issues, listen to one another, address their differences, work to resolve them, and reach decisions based on general agreement.

Action focus serves as the underlying purpose of a Collaborative Action Team. Establishing a team vision and mission, and setting goals and forming strategies can help to prepare a team for action.

The CAT process provides considerable training and support for team development. Training generally covered such topics as shared leadership, action planning, resource development, assessment and evaluation and the use of technology in collaboration. Training local team members to act in the facilitator role and maintain their neutrality while serving in this role was seen as essential to the sustainability and expansion of the CAT process. Team facilitators were trained to be able to determine the most appropriate process to address typical issues and situations teams face. Various group process techniques were practiced, such as brainstorming, consensus building, force field analysis, use of affinity diagrams and the use of T-charts.

Another integral part of the CAT process is to pay attention to implementation issues such as: (1) arranging the logistics for meetings, (2) contacting team members and attending the meetings, (3) conducting the meeting, (4) following through on tasks and responsibilities, and (5) evaluating the meetings.

The Deliberative Model

Sokoloff (1996) describes a deliberative model for engaging the community, based on the work of the National Issues Forums Institute, sponsored by the Kettering Foundation. The goal of this model is to frame problems in public terms so everyone in the community can see that their position will get a fair hearing. The agenda is simply to keep the public responsible for doing the public's work. That work is to define what is in the public interest, identifying basic purposes and community directions. Only the public can build common ground on which to base public policy.

Current models of community engagement play into the hands of special-interest groups, reinforcing each group's belief that their interests are separate from the interests of others. The deliberative model focuses on creating alternative forms of community forums to encourage public deliberations. These forums have several characteristics:

- *The issue to be discussed must be structured or framed to encourage deliberations.* Discussion material should contain at least three, but preferably not more than four choices. All choices should be considered, making sure the positive side of all options is considered.
- *Participants deliberate, they don't debate.* This means that the views of others are carefully considered. Choices about the issues are discussed and the benefits, costs and consequences for each are considered. Participants attempt to understand the impact of different positions on people's lives and work through conflicts. Areas of agreement form the basis for common action and areas of disagreement provide an agenda for future conversation.
- *The forum needs a neutral moderator.* The moderator's job is to ensure that the forum is deliberative, not argumentative. In guiding the deliberation, the moderator keeps people focused on the choices. The moderator helps people work to understand their motivations in liking or disliking different parts of each choice and to recognize that other people have reasons for their opinions. Getting agreement on ground rules is an important part of the moderator's job.

experience the simplicity of intent and uniformity of disposition of the early New England towns and still must account for what might be thought of as human and self-imposed constraints to full and equal participation. (4) Today's communities include a citizenry that is multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and of many religions, to name but a few.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bernhardt, V.L. *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*. Larchmont, NY; Eye on Education, 1998.

This book presents tools to help educators make better decisions based on data. It includes information on multiple measures of data and the interactions of four major measures of data in terms of different levels of data analyses. The book discusses how to gather and analyze major measures of data; interactions of these measures that allow schools to predict what they need to do to prevent failures; and how to pull all the data pieces together to know what changes are needed in the school for improved student learning. Bernhardt also stresses the importance of communicating the results of comprehensive data analyses to the community; and using the results of data analyses for schoolwide improvement.

Bernhardt, V.L. *The School Portfolio: A Comprehensive Framework for School Improvement*. Larchmont, NY; Eye on Education, 1999.

This book shows how to develop a school portfolio using examples from schools, which already establish and maintain them. School portfolios focus on the student, are simple to use, indicative of what needs to happen, set for self-assessment, achievable, encourage ongoing conversations about things that are important, and are comprehensive. Decisions on changes should be based on the collection, analyzing, and use of information about the school community from demographic information, surveys, and standardized test scores. Sections in a school portfolio include leadership, student achievement, quality planning, professional development, partnership (businesses and parents), continuous improvement and evaluation. There are questions and answers on portfolios including creating, updating, rules, responsibilities, and regional accreditation. Staff-developed rubrics and charts on the school improvement process are included.

Blick, Charles (Buzz). "Students, Parents and Community Members as Partners in Strategic School-Community Planning." *Classroom Leadership Online* v2 n2 (1998).

This paper explores the question of who should be involved in strategic decisions that affect a school, a cluster of schools, or an entire school district. It discusses the common problems that hamper effective participation such as workgroups that are too large or too small; selecting the same roster of persons to serve as team members; choosing participants from the top down, rather than from the bottom up; the failure to clarify expected levels of participation; and the tendency to reinvent the wheel. The article recognizes that grassroots involvement can lead to increased public ownership of schools, but such change requires educators to develop attitudes, beliefs, and practical skills that enable them to benefit from their community's increased involvement. The paper lists the eight steps for making participatory design efforts work: (1) define the results you want to achieve; (2) define the system you need to involve for the results you want; (3) form a temporary project-design team; (4) decide whether you want and/or need an outside consultant;

(5) create a project-theme statement; (6) identify key participants; (7) recruit a project-management team; and (8) begin an appropriate strategic-planning process. The article gives some examples of participative planning.

Massachusetts State Dept. of Education. *The Parent, Family, and Community Involvement Guide*. Malden: State of Massachusetts, 2000.

This report presents a guide to involving parents, families, and the community in education. It explains that student achievement increases, schools improve, and parent and community involvement thrives when: (1) parents, families, and community members play an integral role in helping students learn at all grade levels; (2) communication between home and school is consistent, two-way, and meaningful; (3) sound parenting practices are promoted and supported; (4) parents, families, and community members are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought; (5) parents and community members contribute to school planning and decision making; (6) community resources are sought to strengthen schools, communities, and families; and (7) personnel training (preservice and inservice) includes courses and workshops on parent, family, and community involvement. Download from: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/schcouncil/pubs/2000/pandc.doc>

Rudo, Zena H., Achacoso, Michelle, and Perez, Delia. *Collaborative Action Team Process: Bringing Home, School, Community, and Students Together to Improve Results for Children and Families*. Southwest Educational Development Lab., Austin, TX, Nov. 1, 2000.

This report details a study designed to test the sustainability of a school-based Collaborative Action Team (CAT) process, which attempted to address the need to enhance family and community involvement in education and to be self-sustaining over time. Based in communities across five Southwestern states, the intervention tested the sustainability of collaborative partnerships among families, community members, school personnel, and students and the efficacy of this intervention to improve student success. Training for CAT participants consisted of activities to improve their knowledge of, skills in, and attitudes toward collaboration and shared leadership. Qualitative and quantitative measures were used to evaluate and continually refine the process. Data collected provided information on site characteristics, implementation and sustainability of the process, the sustainability of team collaboration, and student outcomes. Overall, results indicated that the development of school-based, collaborative partnerships was an effective way to improve results for students and families in school communities. Establishment of a core team of representative partners was possible with appropriate time and support.

Sokoloff, H. "A Deliberative Mode for Engaging Community: Use of Community Forums Can Under Cut Special-interest Politics." *The School Administrator*, 27, (1996): 12-17.

Current community-engagement models, which relegate the public's role to insignificant activities, play into special-interest groups' hands. One new approach creates alternative forms of community forums to encourage public deliberation. Forums frame issues to invite deliberation; allow participants to deliberate, not debate issues; and provide neutral moderators. A sidebar recounts a Pennsylvania superintendent's experiences.

Uline, C.L. "Town Meeting and Community Engagement." *Journal of School Leadership*, 8, (1998): 533-557.

This article draws upon the history of the American town meeting as a vehicle for understanding this institution. It considers how a New England public school district has used town meetings effectively as a reform vehicle. Town meetings should be considered an honorable, truly democratic forum, not a symbolic gesture to improve public relations.

REFERENCES FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Bernhardt, V.L. *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*. Larchmont, NY; Eye on Education, 1998.

Bernhardt, V.L. *The School Portfolio: A Comprehensive Framework for School Improvement*. Larchmont, NY; Eye on Education, 1999.

Blick, Charles (Buzz). "Students, Parents and Community Members as Partners in Strategic School-Community Planning." *Classroom Leadership Online* v2 n2 (1998).

Massachusetts State Dept. of Education. *The Parent, Family, and Community Involvement Guide*. Malden: State of Massachusetts, 2000.

Rudo, Zena H., Achacoso, Michelle, and Perez, Delia. *Collaborative Action Team Process: Bringing Home, School, Community, and Students Together to Improve Results for Children and Families*. Southwest Educational Development Lab., Austin, TX, Nov. 1, 2000.

Sokoloff, H. "A Deliberative Mode for Engaging Community: Use of Community Forums Can Under Cut Special-interest Politics." *The School Administrator*, 27, (1996): 12-17.

Uline, C.L. "Town Meeting and Community Engagement." *Journal of School Leadership*, 8, (1998): 533-557.

LITERATURE ON NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are a number of approaches to needs assessment used in the social sciences. The discrepancy model (e.g., Kauffman & English, 1979) is perhaps the most frequently used model in education. This model focuses decision making on discrepancies identified between what is expected and what occurs. In this model, there are generally three phases:

- A. Articulating expectations; identifying what “ought to be;”
- B. Performance measurement; determining what is;
- C. Discrepancy identification; ordering and evaluating differences between what ought to be and what is.

The marketing model (e.g., Nickerns, Purga, & Noriega, 1980) defines needs assessment as a feedback process used by organizations to learn about and adapt to the needs of their client populations. This model focuses on determining the needs of a target population and meeting them. Indeed, needs in this model equate with client wants. There are three components of the marketing model:

- Selection of the target population, those eligible for services;
- Choice of competitive position, distinguishing the agency’s services from those offered by other agencies and providers;
- Development of an effective marketing mix, selecting a range of services that will maximize utilization by the target population.

The decision making model (e.g., Keeney & Riaffa, 1976) approaches needs assessment using decision theory (specifically multiattribute utility analysis). This model assumes that decision-makers show biases in judgement when confronted with complex, multidimensional information. Also, it assumes that no single indicator nor criterion measures a construct perfectly. As a result, a series of moderately complex statistical procedures (additive integration) are used to assist decision-makers. There are three components of the decision making model:

- A. Translate attribute scores into utility values (nijs);
- B. Assign weights (wijs) to each attribute;
- C. Integrate the weight and utility values for each attribute using the additive integration rule to compute the need index.

The selection of which model of needs assessment to use depends substantially on purpose.

School districts have a variety of purposes. Foremost among those is teaching students to perform at high levels, particularly in core academic subject areas such as reading, mathematics and science. In this case, improving student performance is the underlying purpose for the assessment. These priorities are reflected clearly throughout the language in chapter 281.12 of the Iowa Administrative Code. Moreover, these priorities are communicated clearly in the code language that specify the types of needs assessment data that need to be collected by schools. The discrepancy model fits very well with this purpose of schools. It allows discussion about what “should be” in an ideal state and creates the vehicle for examining priority. The marketing model fits somewhat better with the answering questions where meeting consumer preference is the underlying purpose of a decision. It is reality that many of the services offered by local schools are regulated by Iowa and federal code. As such, it is not an option to determine “whether” these services will be

offered. Instead, it is more the purpose of the needs assessment to determine the “manner” in which these services are best carried out in the school. The marketing needs assessment model serves schools best here when there are questions about “how consumers prefer” specific services to be provided.

EXPLANATION OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUALITY COMPONENTS

No matter which model of needs assessment is used, a predictable set of steps occurs. These steps include (e.g., McKillop [1987]):

1. Identify users and uses of the needs assessment and analysis.
In this step, persons who wish to collect needs assessment data describe what will be done with the needs assessment data and how they will help in planning.
2. Identify clearly the needs assessment questions that will be answered and the model of needs assessment that will best answer the questions.
No matter which model of needs assessment is used, the data collection and analysis should be grounded in and linked clearly to specific needs assessment questions. These questions provide the answer to the question “why are we collecting this information?” In the absence of articulating these questions, data collection can become unfocused and unnecessarily complicated. Screening or audit level questions identify areas of concern. Diagnostic questions probe an area of identified concern to determine why the concern exists.
3. Identify the target population for data collection on each question.
For each question, there will be an optimal group of individuals to collect data from. This step requires identification of these persons.
4. Determine the nature and amount of data that need to be collected in order to answer the questions.
In this step, needs assessors will match specific data collection techniques (e.g., surveys, focus groups, town meetings, interviews, reviews of existing information, direct observations, etc.) to each assessment question. Different assessment procedures may be more or less appropriate to answering any specific question. A decision also will need to be made about the amount of data that will be necessary to reasonably answer a specific question depending on the level of concern or the stakes. Finally, any data collection forms and/or processes will need to be developed.
5. Collect the data, summarize it and organize it for use.
This is the technical step in needs assessment. It may call on a variety of skills from facilitation to survey construction, to data entry to data analysis, summarization and presentation.
6. Use results to answer the assessment questions (i.e., identify preferences, identify needs and/or describe problems).
Once the needs assessment data are summarized, this step takes the needs assessors back to the needs assessment questions. Each question is reviewed then the needs assessment data are reviewed to help form the basis of an answer to the needs assessment question or to identify further questions to be answered.

7. Document and communicate results.

The narrative answer to the needs assessment question is recorded at this time. A short needs assessment report is written at this point to document the process that was used, the data that were collected and the rationale and answers to the needs assessment questions.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Nagle, R. J. Best Practices in planning and conducting needs assessments. *Best Practices in School Psychology IV*. Washington, DC: National Association of School Psychologists.

In this chapter, Dr. Nagle reviews current literature on needs assessment in schools. The presentation is practical, and a step-by-step approach to educational needs assessment is provided. The relationships between school-based needs assessment and needs assessments in other social sciences is explored. Additionally, a series of specific methodologies for collecting needs assessment data are reviewed. These include surveys, key informants methods, client/community respondents, focus groups, the nominal group technique, the Delphi technique and community forums. Finally, a discussion related to communication of the results of needs assessments is provided. Overall, this chapter is an approachable and useful summary of current educational needs assessment techniques.

REFERENCES FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Kauffman, R., & English, F. W. (1979) *Needs assessment concepts and application*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

Keeney, R. L., & Riaffa, H. (1976). *Decisions with multiple objectives: Preferences and value tradeoffs*. New York: John Wiley.

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Nickerns, J. M., Purga, A. J., & Noriega, P. P. (1980). *Research methods for needs assessment*. Washington, DC: University Press of America.

Pigg, K. E., Carrier, J., & McDonald, T. (1995). *Needs assessment: Uses in program planning in cooperative extension*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri.

Weiss, C. H., & Bucuvalas, M. J. (1980). *Social science research and decision making*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Iowa Professional Development Model

The IPDM suggests goals be based upon analyzed data and be specific. For example, careful analysis of reading achievement data might suggest student needs in the following specific areas: decoding, word attack skills, increased sight vocabulary, comprehension strategies, improved fluency, skill in reading non-fiction and technical materials, etc. Further, actions by buildings and teachers must be aligned with district goals. While alignment is critical, each building must respond specifically to the needs identified through the analysis of their student data. IPDM suggests the articulation of “Ideal” goals which clearly communicate to all stakeholders, provide clarity and help prioritize other goals.

LITERATURE ON LONG-RANGE PLANS/DISTRICT GOAL DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT

In addition to requirements regarding the development of goals required in Ch. 12, the literature is replete with references to the necessity of goals as a part of a continuous improvement process. Goals must be based upon identified needs, serve as a focal point for formative and summative evaluation, and align with the other components of the continuous improvement process. Schmoker (1999) advances the premise that the combination of three concepts constitutes the foundation for results: meaningful informed teamwork, clear and measurable goals, and regular collection and analysis of performance data. Schmoker indicates goals must be:

- measurable
- annual – showing an increase in percentage of students achieving mastery
- focused on student achievement
- linked to year-end assessment
- written in simple direct language (p. 31)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR LONG-RANGE PLANS/DISTRICT GOAL DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT

Schmoker, M. (1999). *Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD

Results advance the premise that the combination of three concepts constitutes the foundation for results: meaningful informed teamwork, clear and measurable goals, and regular collection and analysis of performance data.

Schmoker contends that an emphasis on results is central to school improvement and school improvement is energized by rapid results. Schmoker draws upon a number of examples to show that any school can begin to provide a better education for all students by focusing on results and the conditions that promote success.

Schmoker says goals must be:

- measurable
- annual – showing an increase in percentage of students achieving mastery
- focused on student achievement
- linked to year-end assessment
- written in simple direct language

Wahlstrom, D. (1999). *Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*. Virginia Beach, VA: Successline Inc.

The purpose of this book is to provide readers with clear, easy-to-use ways for using data to make decisions about student achievement. It was written for the educator who does not have a background in educational statistics but has an interest in making use of school data.

Using Data is organized into four major sections: collection, organization, analysis, and use. These sections are the framework for a model or process for using data to improve student achievement.

Calhoun, E. (1994) *How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

This book reviews the who, what, why, when, where and how of conducting schoolwide action research to improve student learning. This is a fancy way of saying, "Let's study what's happening at our school, decide if we can make it a better place by changing what and how we teach and how we relate to students and the community; study the effects; and then begin again."

In the book Calhoun presents the simple process of collective study in action. First, seek agreement with others on what to study. Second, collect and share information about students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Third, search your own experiences and examine educational research for strategies and programs that will improve your students' understanding in the area of study. Fifth, collect data on results, study effects, and begin the cycle all over again.

Joyce, B., Wolf, J., Calhoun, E. (1993) *The Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

The authors provide a research-based practical guide for renewal that keeps one goal central: improving student learning. In the self-renewing organization, educators in all positions in the system create a better learning environment for themselves and students by studying education and how to improve it. The resulting initiatives for educational improvement propel the students into more active states of learning; and the greater activity of the students, in turn, stimulates the educators to engage in more study and create even more vigorous learning environments.

This book is the product of reflection on several thousand studies of teaching strategies, curriculum designs, site-centered school improvement efforts, action research projects, staff development designs, and the general literature on innovation, school renewal, and the culture of the school. The citations throughout are illustrative and range from reflective reports and specific studies to summaries of research on particular areas.

Allen, L., Rogers, D., Hensley, F., Glanton, M., Livingston, M. (1999) *A Guide to Renewing Your School*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

This book is based on many years of practical experience, numerous case examples, and empirical studies from the League of Professional School, a reform network based in Georgia. This is a hands-on book that guides school practitioners through the essential steps of a reform process: designing a covenant to guide teaching and learning, creating a shared governance process to promote democratic leadership and decision making and implementing action research to assess the reform process.

Glickman, C. (1993) *Renewing America's Schools*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
This book provides a clear and sound foundation for reforming schools. We are provided with the "Covenant," the "Charter" and "Critical Study" are powerful guidelines for enacting new schools suited to the development of democratic societies. The book raises the most fundamental questions about the purpose of public education, their role of schools, and the needed school-based application to fulfill the promise of education in a democratic society. This book shows teachers, principals, students, parents, central office personnel, school boards, and community members exactly what they need to do to create schools that are purposeful, moral and successful places.

REFERENCES FOR LONG-RANGE PLANS/DISTRICT GOAL DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT

Sparks, D. (1999), *The Singular Power of One Goal*, Journal of Staff Development, Winter 1999.

Schmoker, M.M. (1999), *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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Noyce, P., Perda, D., Traver, R. (2000), *Creating Data-Driven Schools*. Educational Leadership, February 2000.

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Holly, P., Lange, M.D. , *Comprehensive school improvement planning portfolio*. New Iowa School Development Corporation, School Improvement handbook series

Holcomb, E. (1996), *Asking the right questions: tools and techniques for teamwork*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Wahlstrom, D. (1999). *Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*. Virginia Beach, VA: Successline Inc.

Calhoun, E. (1994) *How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

Joyce, B., Wolf, J., Calhoun, E. (1993) *The Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

Allen, L., Rogers, D., Hensley, F., Glanton, M., Livingston, M. (1999) *A Guide to Renewing Your School*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Glickman, C. (1993) *Renewing America's Schools*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Action planning refers to “districtwide actions to accomplish long-range and annual improvement goals and early intervention goals (not required for non-public schools).” Actions include “improvement of curricular and instructional practices.” Action planning should also “document the consolidation of state and federal resources and requirements as appropriate to implement actions in [the] comprehensive school improvement plan.”

Determination of actions involves thoughtful deliberation regarding what changes to make or actions to take. It makes use of a gap analysis to compare what is actually occurring in a school environment with what should be happening relative to goals/needs.

Actions consist of changes within the school or school district relative to curriculum (what is taught) and/or instruction (how it is taught). Staff development is an important aspect of action planning.

Implementation means following through on planned actions as well as assessing the results of implementation and making necessary adjustments on the basis of what is learned.

Required components of action plans include:

- Districtwide goals
- Data collection
- Task/action steps
- Resources

Optional, but useful components of action plans include:

- Building-level goals
- Success criteria
- Timelines
- Responsible parties
- Implementation monitoring

Chapter 8 – Evaluation of Comprehensive School Improvement Plan

A checklist is provided with a list of questions that districts may use as part of the evaluation process. Some of the questions on the checklist ask districts to evaluate how staff development initiatives, personnel evaluation systems and board policies contribute to progress on long-range and annual improvement goals.

With regard to consolidated planning, the TA guide suggests that data from state and federal programs should be used to

- Measure progress toward established goals
- Analyze the effectiveness with which each program supports comprehensive school improvement
- Feed back into the process of continuous improvement
- Evaluate the comprehensive school improvement plan (along with other elements).

LITERATURE ON ACTION PLANNING

A variety of models for action planning are described in the literature. (Some of these resources are annotated in this chapter). In each case, action planning is part of a larger framework for planning that various authors describe as “strategic planning,” “school improvement planning,” “action research,” “continuous improvement” or other terms. Some of the common elements from these sources are summarized below.

are systemic, occur at all levels (e.g., classroom, school, district and community), are explicitly connected with performance standards, and are coherent in their linkages among curriculum, professional development, supervision and evaluation.

4. Describe action steps, timelines, person(s) responsible, necessary resources, and data collection strategies.

The next step in action planning is to explicitly identify the specific steps that must be taken in order to implement the selected strategy, along with the other necessary elements described above. This step in the process should be described with sufficient detail so that the strategy may be implemented without additional planning. It is helpful if specific benchmarks and timelines are established that identify when specific sub-tasks should be completed in order to accomplish the ultimate implementation of the entire strategy. The data collection strategies should describe data regarding implementation (e.g., numbers of persons involved in training, products developed, etc.) along with data regarding changes in student performance.

5. Review all action plans, ensure coordination and alignment and establish timelines for implementation.

This step in the process involves a comprehensive review of all of the action plans submitted by teams. This responsibility may rest with the original planning team or another group of individuals who have responsibility for overall coordination of the continuous improvement process. This review of action plans should ensure that all of the plans support the broad-scale outcomes of the continuous improvement effort and that selected strategies do not conflict with each other or compete for the same resources. In addition, since change is a complex and time-consuming process, and since most continuous improvement plans are in operation for 3-5 years, action plans should be prioritized so that only a portion of the selected strategies will be implemented during any given year. The planning team should be responsible for establishing timelines that identify the sequence in which specific action plans are implemented.

6. Assign leadership responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Once an action plan has been approved, the planning team should assign a person or person(s) to have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the plan is implemented. Most commonly, this person will be the action plan team leader. This assignment of implementation responsibilities is a critical factor in effective implementation of action plans. Implementation responsibilities include communication with the planning team and other stakeholders, ongoing collection and review of data relevant to plan implementation and student outcomes, coordination with other action team leaders and oversight of any necessary alterations in action plans.

7. Implement the plan.

Feddema identifies two conditions that are critical for successful implementation of action plans. The first condition is that “those who are responsible for the organization must relentlessly support implementation of the plan.” The author suggests that a district must view their continuous improvement plan as the “over-arching schema that provides the context for all existing and proposed activities within the district.” Feddema’s second essential condition for successful implementation is the “thorough fusion of action plans into the mutual accountabilities for all persons.” In other words, district personnel must be clear about and accountable for their specific responsibilities relevant to the implementation of action plans. Finally, the author reminds planners that continuous improvement efforts must be integrated into the existing operational responsibilities of administrators and other staff members. In other words, planners must recognize that district or school personnel

will have ongoing responsibility for conducting the day-to-day operations of the organization as well for implementing planned change activities. Personnel must have the necessary time and resources for both types of activities.

8. Review action plans periodically to address results of data collection, fidelity of implementation, and needs for alterations in action plans.

Action plans should include descriptions of how data will be collected relevant to the completion of action steps and evidence of progress toward desired outcomes. The district's planning team and/or action planning teams may have responsibility for making any necessary alterations in action steps, timelines, or resources. Action plans should be reviewed individually and collectively at least once a year.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ACTION PLANNING

Carr, J. F., & Harris, D. E. (2001). *Succeeding with Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This recent publication describes an approach to the meaningful implementation and application of curriculum standards at all levels of an educational system. The authors contend that a process of "standards linking" is necessary in order to ensure that curriculum standards are utilized effectively. The eleven components included in the authors' process of standards linking include development of a vision, current state analysis, curriculum and assessment plan, school decisions, resources, professional development plan, supervision and evaluation, student profiles, a comprehensive assessment system, reporting, and action planning.

The action planning chapter describes roles and responsibilities for action planning teams and presents a four-step model for action planning. The four steps in the model are: (1) examine student performance results; (2) examine other sources of data and information; (3) summarize information and interpret findings; and (4) link findings to action steps. The authors also discuss issues related to assessing, approving and implementing action plans. They offer a self assessment tool for action planning that identifies components in the action planning process, criteria related to these components, descriptors for each criterion, and space for teams to provide a self review of their performance relevant to each criterion and the related descriptors. Finally, the authors provide examples of each step in the process.

Feddema, H. (1994). Internal coordinator's guide. In J. A. Cook (Ed.), *Strategic Planning for America's Schools*. Montgomery, AL: The Colonial-Cambridge Management Group Inc.

Dr. William Cook of the Cambridge Management Group and his colleagues have formulated a very systematic and detailed approach to strategic planning for school improvement. (The School Administrators of Iowa is a domestic affiliate of the Cambridge Management group and there are a number of Iowa school districts and AEAs that have used the Cambridge strategic planning model.) Although the methods and materials included in this approach to strategic planning are available only to individuals who have been trained by the Cambridge Group, these materials provide a very detailed description of how to proceed with strategic planning, including the sub-step related to action planning.

Howard Feddema has written a guide for internal facilitators of strategic planning that includes detailed instructions on how to manage the action planning subcomponent of strategic planning.

This reference describes logistics related to selecting, training and coaching action team leaders, conducting planning sessions, reviewing and aligning action plans and drafting an implementation schedule. The author also discusses issues related to ensuring the implementation of action plans and conducting periodic updates of action plans.

Hirsh, S. & Murphy, M. (1991). *School Improvement Planning Manual*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

This reference provides an overview of school improvement planning along with specific activities and resources to be used by a school improvement planning facilitator. The manual is intended to assist planners in:

- establishing readiness and commitment to planning,
- facilitating a long-range planning process for school improvement, and
- implementing a long-range plan.

The manual is divided into sections related to establishing readiness for planning, gathering data, long-range planning, and action planning. Specific activities for each step in the process are included along with accompanying transparencies and handouts. There is also a supplemental section on maintaining momentum that includes activities for conducting annual update sessions on a school improvement plan along with activities for maintaining commitment to a school improvement plan.

The action planning section of the manual has instructions for training action leaders, recruiting team members, writing action plans and implementing action plans.

Mirr, R. (2000). *Logic Models: A Planning Guide*. Iowa City, IA: Higher Plain, Inc.

In this training manual, Ron Mirr presents a “logic model” for program planning and grant writing. The five components of this logic model include the following:

- Problem areas (with indicators—a snapshot of today).
- Activities (what you will do—the means to the “end”).
- Resources (things you need—anything with a \$\$ value).
- Results (process and outcome—what the \$\$ buys).
- Goals (written in future tense—a snapshot of the “end”).

The training manual describes each of these components and explains how they might be developed as part of the planning process. Worksheets and focusing questions are included to assist planning teams in developing each component of the logic model.

With regard to action planning, the author describes a rationale for identifying and selecting activities along with rules of thumb, which suggest that every activity should have at least one measurable result and at least one resource.

National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (1998). *At Your Fingertips: Using Everyday Data to Improve Schools*. Berkeley, CA: MPR Associates, Inc.

This reference is a workbook that is intended to help educators make use of a variety of local data sources to “better manage, monitor and improve schools.” The workbook provides a structured approach to the development of performance indicator systems that can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, develop improvement strategies, and monitor progress in meeting

education goals. The workbook describes a six-step process for the establishment of a performance indicator system that supports continuous improvement. The six steps in the process are as follows:

1. Establish goals.
2. Identify related outcomes, practices and inputs.
3. Determine data sources and indicators.
4. Examine the data.
5. Set performance targets.
6. Monitor performance over time.

A number of worksheets are provided that guide planners through the six steps in the process. The worksheets provide focusing questions and structured planning formats for each of the steps, along with examples from a fictional school district.

Relevant to action planning, the manual describes an approach to the selection of action strategies which asks planners to describe specific student outcomes along with related school practices and school inputs. The authors define school practices as “strategies adopted to achieve or improve your targeted student outcomes, including curriculum, instruction, assessment methods, and supporting structures.” They define school inputs as “resources [schools] have to work with including students, staff, community support, physical plant, equipment and budget.” Worksheets and focusing questions guide planners through an examination of these factors as they relate to action planning.

Schmoker, M. (1999). *Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD

Results advances the premise that the combination of three concepts constitutes the foundation for results: meaningful informed teamwork, clear and measurable goals, and regular collection and analysis of student performance data. Schmoker contends that an emphasis on student achievement results is central to school improvement and school improvement is energized by rapid results. Schmoker draws upon a number of examples to show that any school can begin to provide a better education for all students by focusing on results and the conditions that promote success.

Schmoker says goals must be:

- measurable,
- annual– showing an increase in percentage of students achieving mastery,
- focused on student achievement,
- linked to year-end assessment, and
- written in simple direct language.

Wahlstrom, D. (1999). *Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*. Virginia Beach, VA: Successline Inc.

The purpose of this book is to provide readers with clear, easy-to-use ways for using data to make decisions about student achievement. It was written for the educator who does not have a background in educational statistics but has an interest in making use of school data.

“Using Data” is organized into four major sections: collection, organization, analysis, and use. These sections are the framework for a model or process for using data to improve student achievement.

Calhoun, E. (1994) *How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

This book reviews the who, what, why, when, where and how of conducting school-wide action research to improve student learning. This is a fancy way of saying, "Let's study what's happening at our school, decide if we can make it a better place by changing what and how we teach and how we relate to students and the community; study the effects; and then begin again."

In the book Calhoun presents the simple process of collective study in action. First, seek agreement with others on what to study. Second, collect and share information about students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Third, search your own experiences and examine educational research for strategies and programs that will improve your students' understanding in the area of study. Fifth, collect data on results, study effects, and begin the cycle all over again.

Joyce, B., Wolf, J., Calhoun, E. (1993) *The Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD

The authors provide a research-based practical guide for renewal that keeps one goal central: improving student learning. In the self-renewing organization, educators in all positions in the system create a better learning environment for themselves and students by studying education and how to improve it. The resulting initiatives for educational improvement propel the students into more active states of learning. And the greater activity of the students, in turn, stimulates the educators to engage in more study and create even more vigorous learning environments.

This book is the product of reflection on several thousand studies of teaching strategies, curriculum designs, site-centered school improvement efforts, action research projects, staff development designs, and the general literature on innovation, school renewal, and the culture of the school. The citations throughout are illustrative and range from reflective reports and specific studies to summaries of research on particular areas.

Holly, P. J. (1999). *Success4 Action Guide*. Iowa Department of Education, IA.

This technical assistance resource pack contains three action guides, including; the school improvement process, the collaborative context and implementation strategies and best practices. Action guide #1 contains resources for assessing, analyzing and prioritizing needs. Included is a 5-step process for action planning, a 4-step guide for implementing actions and a 4-step process for evaluating and reprioritizing actions. Action guide #2 provides tools and processes to gain input and work with groups and within teams. Action Guide #3 identifies critical elements that are necessary to meet the needs of all students.

REFERENCES FOR ACTION PLANNING

Carr, J. F., & Harris, D. E. (2001). *Succeeding with Standards: Linking Curriculum, Assessment, and Action Planning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Feddema, H. (1994). Internal coordinator's guide. In J. A. Cook (Ed.), *Strategic Planning for America's Schools*. Montgomery, AL: The Colonial-Cambridge Management Group Inc.

Hirsh, S. & Murphy, M. (1991). *School Improvement Planning Manual*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

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- Calhoun, E. (1994) *How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD
- Joyce, B., Wolf, J., Calhoun, E. (1993) *The Self-Renewing School*, Virginia: ASCD
- Holly, P. J. (1999). *Success4 Action Guide*. Iowa Department of Education, IA.
- Holly, P., Lange, M.D., *Action Planning at the Building Level*. New Iowa School Development Corporation, school improvement handbook series.

the consolidation of state and federal resources and requirements as appropriate to implement actions in [the] comprehensive school improvement plan.”

Determination of actions involves thoughtful deliberation regarding what changes to make or actions to take. It makes use of a gap analysis to compare what is actually occurring in a school environment with what should be happening relative to goals/needs.

Actions consist of changes within the school or school district relative to curriculum (what is taught) and/or instruction (how it is taught). Staff development is an important aspect of action planning.

Implementation means following through on planned actions as well as assessing the results of implementation and making necessary adjustments on the basis of what is learned.

Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM)

The IPDM features collaboration between educators as a significant component of implementation. The planful use of collaboration includes scheduled opportunities and structure for time spent together. Monitoring implementation plans to formatively evaluate students’ response, and then make necessary adjustments is also proposed.

LITERATURE ON IMPLEMENTATION

The literature reviewing reform implementation suggests a significant variability between schools and variability of efforts within a school. Bodilly’s (1998) review of the implementation of NAS designs found that only half of the schools were implementing the basic elements of the schoolwide programs after the first two years. In reviewing 130 schools who were implementing NAS restructuring designs, Berends’ (2000) found that 75% to 90% of the variance in factors of support, implementation, teacher professional growth, and student achievement and engagement lay within schools rather than between them. In a longitudinal study of eight restructuring school sites Muncey and McQuillan (1996) found that the scope of change often did not spread school-wide but remained strong in some individual classrooms. A challenge can involve deepening implementation efforts while attempting to broaden participation. With these challenges in mind, it can be seen why schoolwide reform is often a slow process. Disimone (2002) argues that “it is first necessary to address implementation factors before trying to link the reform designs to student outcomes.”

To ensure implementation with fidelity, some writers have suggested the use of benchmarks by which schools can monitor their implementations (Slavin & Madden, 2001). The monitoring of implementation is often associated with formative evaluation activities and includes the extent and quality of the implementation of action plans in the CSIP. In addition to the monitoring the efforts of educators within the reform initiative several authors have emphasized the importance of concurrently monitoring students outcomes. The implementation of change initiatives without the inclusion of a few clear student achievement goals that are actively monitored has not generally proven to be effective (Schmoker, 1999). Rather the interrelations of attending to implementation fidelity together with accomplishing specific student outcomes will be critical to the success of school-wide reform.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON IMPLEMENTATION

Desimone, Laura (2002) How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented? *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 433-480.

In this article, Dr. Desimone demonstrates the interdependence of strong implementation and a strong policy of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR). All of five CSR policy attributes are felt to have an impact on the implementation of comprehensive reform. Policy attributes include being: specific, consistent, authoritative, powerful and stable. The author indicates in particular that, “specificity is related to implementation fidelity, power to immediate implementation effects, and consistency, authority, and stability to long-lasting change (p 433)”.

REFERENCES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Berends, M. (2000). Teacher-reported effects of New American Schools design: Exploring relationships to teacher background and school context. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 22(1), 65-82.

Bodilly, S. J. (1998). *Lessons from New American Schools' scale-up phase: Prospects for bringing designs to multiple schools*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Desimone, Laura (2002) How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented? *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 433-480.

Muncey, D. E., & McQuillan, P. J. (1996). *Reform and resistance in schools and classrooms: An ethnographic view of the Coalition of Essential Schools*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Schmoker, M.M. (1999), *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (Eds.). (2001). *Success for All: Research and reform in elementary school education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Appendix D

EVALUATION

Service 6:

Evaluation of School Improvement

DEFINITION OF THE EVALUATION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Chapter 12: General Accreditation Standards

281 – 12.8(1)e Evaluation of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

“A school or school district shall develop strategies to collect data and information to determine if the plan has accomplished the goals for which it was established.”

281 – 12.8(1)b. Data collection, analysis, and goal setting.

(4) Annual data collection and analysis. The ongoing needs assessment process shall include provisions for collecting and analyzing annual assessment data on the state indicators, other locally determined indicators, and locally established student learning goals.

Chapter 72: Accreditation Area Educational Agencies

281 – 72.4(1) The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning (Proposed Rules for AEAs Support of Districts)

“The AEA assists schools and school districts in assessing needs of all students, developing collaborative relationships among community agencies, establishing shared direction, implementing actions to meet goals, and reporting progress toward goals.” There is no direct reference to providing technical assistance for the evaluation of Comprehensive School Improvement Plans, however, it is implied as a necessary component prior to the reporting of progress toward goals.

281 – 72.4(3) The AEA shall deliver curriculum, instruction, and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and science but can also be applied to other curriculum areas. These services support the development, implementation, and assessment of rigorous content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science. The AEA assists schools and school districts to gather and analyze student achievement data as well as data about the learning environment, compare those data to external knowledge base, and use that information to guide school and school district goal setting and implementation of actions to improve student learning.

Department of Education Technical Assistance Guide

Chapter 3: Data Collection, Analysis, and Goal Setting

“In the school improvement process, data collection is a systematic method used to gather information related to student learning. Data analysis is a process whereby collected data is carefully interpreted and then represented clearly and accurately for others to review. Only after data collection and analysis are completed can schools and school districts and their communities

know how students are doing. This knowledge will permit sound collaborative decision making regarding what the goals should be.” (p. 19)

“Data collection, analysis... are processes for systematically focusing on districtwide school improvement. They also assist in targeting school or school district initiatives to raise achievement for all students. Data collection, analysis... are not one-time events disconnected from other components of the school improvement process; they take place continuously throughout the process.” (p. 19)

“It is through repeating the steps of data collection, analysis... that schools and school districts can begin to meet the demand for ever higher student achievement.” (p. 20)

Data collection and analysis will occur as several points during the school improvement process: for ongoing and long-range needs assessments, for setting long-range and annual improvement goals, and for measuring progress towards those goals.

To further describe and define the concepts, the DE also suggests that data collection and analysis:

- a.) are processes for systematically focusing on districtwide school improvements;
- b.) assist in targeting district initiatives to raise achievement for all students within specified content areas;
- c.) take place continually throughout the school improvement process;
- d.) are crucial systemic inquiry processes to respond to the public’s higher expectations;
- e.) help establish historical trends and current student achievement levels; and
- f.) serve as a basis for deciding on initiatives that will accelerate student learning.

Chapter 8

Evaluation of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan determines whether the district is making a difference in student progress toward learning goals. This allows stakeholders to have data/information needed to determine long-range and annual improvement goals for continuous improvement.

- Purposes of the evaluation of a district’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan are to:
 - Show results
 - Show how results measure up to what was intended
 - Provide accountability and public reporting
 - Determine if resources are targeted for maximum impact on student learning and continuous improvement
 - Determine if student learning goals are appropriate.
 - Determine if the right data about student learning in relation to stated goals is being collected.
 - Determine if perceptions about student learning are accurate.
 - Celebrate successes.
- Examples of evaluation plans are provided in the technical assistance guide and focus primarily on implementation (process) criteria, i.e. providing a foundation to allow for continuous improvement through the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

Iowa Professional Development Model

The Iowa Professional Development Model has the following to say about Program Evaluation: Ongoing Data Collection (Formative Evaluation): As they implement new curriculums and instructional strategies targeted at improving student learning in specific areas, schools need tools for collecting information about student responses to changes in the instructional program. The frequency with which these data are collected depends on the nature of the planned change. For example, changes in fluency are likely to occur more rapidly than the ability to address higher-order comprehension questions, and data collection points should be set accordingly. (Iowa Professional Development Model, 2002, p. 23).

Program Evaluation (Summative): While ongoing data collection (formative evaluation) entails frequent measurement of targeted outcomes and guides training decisions and program adjustments, program (summative) evaluation address the question “Does this intervention work?” Measures of program effectiveness generally occur at greater intervals – perhaps yearly – or on whatever schedule the district/school has established for taking stock of its progress toward student achievement goals. Regardless of how the program is evaluated, these data are used in the school’s decision-making as it plans next steps. (Iowa Professional Development Model, 2002, p. 24).

LITERATURE ON EVALUATION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Schools collect and analyze data for a variety of reasons: (a) to provide students with feedback on their performance, (b) to measure program success and effectiveness, (c) to improve instruction, (d) to guide curriculum development and revision, (e) to promote accountability, and/or (f) to meet state and federal requirements (Bernhardt, 1998). In addition, data collection and analysis can help schools by replacing hunches with facts, identifying root causes of problems, and answering important questions for the community (i.e., “What are we getting for our investment?”). As a result, data collection and analysis can lead to improved student outcomes and school improvement efforts (Schmoker, 1999; Wahlstrom, 1999). Bernhardt (1998) believes that what separates schools who are successful in their school improvement efforts from those who are not, is the use of data.

There are many different types of data for schools to collect and analyze: demographics (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, grade level), attendance, drop-out and graduation rates, student achievement and ongoing progress, perceptions (teachers’, students’, parents’, and community), current practices and processes, and business/community needs. These data are then used for a variety of purposes, such as providing students with feedback about their performance, improving instruction, guiding curriculum development and revisions, measuring success of effectiveness, and meeting state or federal requirements (Bernhardt, 1998). Schmoker (1999) states that “data make the invisible visible, revealing strengths and weaknesses” (p. 44). However, the goal of data collection and analysis is not to continuously gather more and more data, rather it is to use meaningful data for a specific purpose (Bernhardt, 1998; Creighton, 2001). In other words, “Just because data exist does not mean the data must be used” (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 234).

There are guidelines about ethics within data collection and analysis. Risks to individuals who provide data during the data collection process and are included in the reported results should be minimized, if not eliminated. Data should remain confidential, if not anonymous. The collection and analysis of data should be well designed and appropriate to the questions being investigated. Censoring of data that are collected or analyzed may create a bias in the results reported or used and need to be explained, or avoided (Mark, Eysell, & Campbell, 1999).

Using data as part of the school improvement process does not stop with data collection and analysis. The goal of data collection and analysis is to gather, reduce and synthesize information, and then allow for inferences and interpretation. The goal of data interpretation is to combine the results of data analysis with value statements, criteria, and standards in order to make meaningful conclusions and recommendations (Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

Product/Outcome Evaluation.

In their now classic book on educational evaluation, Madaus, Scriven, and Stufflebeam (1983) present a brief history of the field, highlighting the seminal work of Tyler who was the first to take an objective stance that concentrated on learning outcomes. Both progressive education and behavioral psychology heavily influenced Tyler's work in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus, not only has he become known as the "father of educational evaluation," but he also played an important role in providing a base for educational reform, as well as the foundation for much of what was later done in special education. For Tyler, success of an educational program hinged on whether or not behaviorally defined objectives were met.

Process Evaluation.

Before Tyler's work, evaluation focussed on whether or not those factors viewed by professionals as important, were in place. Many evaluations still involve this pure process approach (Scriven, 1993). Common examples of this include a) accreditation studies where a program is evaluated by what resources, facilities, and human capabilities are in place; and b) teacher evaluations that are based on classroom visits.

Program Evaluation.

Glasman and Nevo (1988) define educational evaluation as "...a systematic activity of using information to describe (educational) objects and judge their merit or worth" (p. 34).

They go on to emphasize that two key points that need to be considered in parallel are that the description is based on systematic, objective data, but that determination of merit or worth requires judgement, which is usually based on values and norms. Additionally, Scriven (1993) describes the difference between product evaluation and program evaluation. Program evaluation must consider factors beyond whether or not an outcome meets a goal. It must also consider how the goal was achieved. This includes the political influences and community norms and values. It considers the processes used to meet the goal, as well as the value of the goal itself. Moreover, McCoy and Reynolds (in Reynolds & Walberg, 1998) point out the need to incorporate both product and process measures in program evaluation. Process evaluation serves as a test for the accuracy of the assumption that a program was implemented as designed. Beginning about the time of the now classic work of Madaus, Scriven, and Stufflebeam (1983), and continuing through to the present (The Evaluation Center, 2001), professionals in the area of program evaluation emphasize the need to synthesize data about both the product/outcomes and the processes used to get to those outcomes. It is this confluence of information that provides the basis for sound decision making. However, as Scriven (1993) points out, this is where many evaluations fall apart. Until recently, the methods for combining the data lagged behind the intent. Lipsey and Cordary (2000) also point out the need to consider both product/outcome data and process data, but they also extend this to identify methods to statistically analyze the combined data. Further, the Evaluation Center (2001) at Western Michigan University has published a number of large-scale evaluations that do just that.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR EVALUATION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORT

Bernhardt, V. L. (1997). *Data Analysis Workshop*. Chico, CA: Education for the Future Initiative.

This book gives information on why gathering data is important. In addition, it focuses on how to gather and begin to analyze the needed data in multiple areas: demographics, perceptions, student learning, and school processes. It is organized like a workshop presentation.

Bernhardt, V. L. (1998). *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

This book presents practical tools to help educators make better decisions based on data. Targeted at the non-statistician, this book shows how to gather, analyze, and use information for school improvement. It shows how to pull all the data analysis pieces together to know what changes are needed to improve student learning, thus using the results of data analysis for schoolwide improvement planning. The examples are based on data collected from real schools at both the elementary and high school levels.

Creighton, T. B. (2001). *Schools and Data: The Educator's Guide for Using Data to Improve Decision Making*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This book focuses on the relevance of statistics in the day-to-day lives of principals and teachers. It is a step-by-step guide to using existing school data to help facilitate more appropriate and effective decisions. The explanation of statistical strategies is intended to help educators improve their skills in problem analysis, program evaluation, data-based decisionmaking, and report preparation.

Evaluation Center, <<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/>>

The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University is staffed by some of the most noted evaluators in the country (e.g., center director Daniel Stufflebeam and Michael Scriven). The center maintains the Web site listed above. This site is an excellent source of information about the latest advances and news in program evaluation. The site is varied in contents and includes the complete text of some large-scale evaluations as well as a number of "Occasional Papers," newsletters, and other materials related to program evaluation.

Glasman, N.S. & Nevo, D. (1988). *Evaluation in decision making: The case of school administration*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Glasman and Nevo define educational evaluation as follows: *fa systematic activity of using information to describe (educational) objects and judge their merit or worth (p. 34)*. For the authors, inherent in this definition is the need to take a broad look at programs that are being evaluated. Also important in this definition is the need for objective information, juxtaposed with judgment that is influenced by values, preferences, and other contexts. This book was written for school administrators, especially principals. The authors deal straightforwardly with the socio-political, legal, and ethical dimensions of evaluation, while guiding the administrator through a set of sound criteria for evaluation to improve decisionmaking.

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, (1994). *The Program Evaluation Standards* (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This book describes 30 standards, categorized into four groups corresponding to the four attributes of sound and fair program evaluation: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Each standard is accompanied by an overview of the intent, guidelines for application, common errors, and case illustrations.

Lipsey, M.W. & Cordray, D.S. (2000). *Evaluation methods for social intervention*. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51, 345-375.

In this article, Lipsey and Cordray lead us through the struggle of the need for scientific control for attributing causation versus the restraints of what is ethically and practically possible in program evaluation. The authors review the latest and most salient advances in the development of statistical models that enable the evaluators to examine change and correlates of change in an integrated approach that provides the best information about program effects. The importance of grounding this work in program theory (e.g., learning theory) is noted. Moreover, without the possibility of experimental control, the authors emphasize the need to provide extensive descriptive information about:

- Program implementation (i.e., process monitoring or evaluation).
- Client/student characteristics.
- Patterns of change.

Madaus, G.F., Scriven, M.S., & Stufflebeam, D.L. (Eds.) (1983). *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing.

Evaluation Models has become the classic overview of program evaluation. This work begins with a historical overview of program evaluation, followed by an analysis and conceptualization of evaluation. However, the majority of the text focuses on various models of program evaluation, with a chapter devoted to each model. A strength of this work, and the reason why it has become such a classic, is that these chapters were written by professionals who are still among the most noteworthy in the field. For the most part, those who were at the forefront of the development of each of the models were the ones who authored the respective chapters. This book is excellent for those who need a good introduction to program evaluation, but it also has important and thoughtful information that is helpful for even experienced evaluators to re-visit.

Reynolds, A.J. & Walberg, H.J. (Eds.) (1998). *Evaluation research for evaluation productivity*. In H.J. Walberg (Ed.), *Advances in educational productivity* (Vol. 7). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press.

As the name suggests, this edited volume presents an overview of the recent advances in educational evaluation, including the research on the effects of evaluation. Further, this work emphasizes evaluating the relative (i.e., to other similar programs) effectiveness and efficiency of programs for varying populations. The book brings together the work of a number of contemporary evaluation researchers who describe and illustrate various approaches. Practical as well as theoretical examples, instruments, and procedures are included.

Scriven, M.S. (1993). *Hard-won lessons in program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

In this book, Michael Scriven uses his extensive experience in the field of program evaluation to reflect on and explore some of the important elements of the evaluative process. Scriven presents his ideas as lessons that revolve around 31 “theses” on the nature of program evaluation. These include:

- Program evaluation is not a determination of goal attainment (p 16).
- Side effects are often the main point (p 49).
- Non-comparative evaluations are comparatively useless (p. 58).
- Merit and quality are not the same as worth and value (p. 67).
- “Pulling it all together” is where most evaluations fall apart (p. 72).
- Validity does not ensure credibility (p. 75).
- Validity and credibility do not ensure utility (p. 75).
- Even utilization does not ensure utility (p.75).

In this little book Scriven is somewhat irreverent with a touch of humor, as he presents his ideas in ways that challenges the reader to think. (Note: This book could be an excellent tool for small group study and discussion of program evaluation.)

Wahlstrom, D. (1999). *Using Data to Improve Student Achievement: A Handbook for Collecting, Organizing, Analyzing and Using Data*. Virginia Beach, VA: Successline.

This book is written for the novice who wants to use school data to make decisions about student achievement. It shows how to use outcome, demographic, and process data in school improvement. A list of questions provides direction to data collection and analysis. Templates and data organizers are provided as examples of how to set up data tables for analysis.

REFERENCES ON EVALUATION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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Appendix E

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Service 7:

Assessment of Student Progress

DEFINITION OF ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Chapter 12: General Accreditation Standards

The following is taken from Chapter 12, General Accreditation Standards, Iowa Administrative Code School Rules of Iowa, Iowa Department of Education, July, 1999, Page 20; section 281-12.8.

- **Assessment of Student Progress**

Each school or school district shall include in its comprehensive school improvement plan provisions for districtwide assessment of student progress for all students. The plan shall identify valid and reliable student assessments aligned with local content standards. These assessments are not limited to commercially developed measures. School districts receiving early intervention funding described in subrule 12.5(18) shall provide for diagnostic reading assessments for kindergarten through grade 3 students as described in 1999 Iowa Acts, House File 743.

- **State Indicators**

Using at least one districtwide assessment, a school or school district shall assess student progress on the state indicators in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science as specified in subrule 12.8(3). At least one districtwide assessment shall allow for, but not be limited to, the comparison of the school or school district's students with students from across the state and in the nation in reading, mathematics, and science. A school or school district shall use additional assessments to measure progress on locally determined content standards in at least reading, mathematics, and science.

- **Performance Levels**

A school or school district shall establish at least three performance levels on at least one districtwide valid and reliable assessment in the areas of reading and mathematics for at least grades 4, 8, and 11 and science in grades 8 and 11 or use the achievement levels as established by the Iowa Testing Program to meet the intent of this subparagraph (2).

Chapter 72 Accreditation Area Educational Agencies

281-72.4(1) The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning. The AEA assists schools and school districts in assessing needs of all students...

281-72.4(3) The AEA shall deliver curriculum, instruction and assessment services that address the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics and science but can also be applied to other curricular areas. These services support the development, implementation, and assessment of rigorous content standards in, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science. The AEA assists schools and school districts to gather and analyze student achievement data...

Department of Education Technical Assistance Guide

The state's Technical Assistance Guide delineates four factors the school district should take into account in planning and implementing its assessment system: the assessment plan, alignment, performance levels, and technical adequacy. The letter from Judy Jeffrey of October, 2000, elaborated on these concepts by specifically requiring that districts submit to the state an assessment plan that outlines the alignment of their assessments with their standards. It states that any assessments used to measure progress towards annual improvement goals must have three performance levels, and must have established technical adequacy.

LITERATURE ON ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999) describe criteria for assessments, including reliability, validity, fairness, and policies for using assessments appropriately. Essentially, the standards argue that careful, appropriate alignment work provides a core of evidence of the validity of the assessment. The standards also emphasize the variable need for reliability information depending on the significance of the decisions being made.

Title I's Peer Reviewer Guidance document (1999) describes the evidence expected of the quality of state assessment systems. Given that much of the impetus behind the assessment requirements that schools are held to is Title I, this document can provide direction to schools in developing high quality assessment systems. The document outlines qualities of alignment of assessments to standards, and discusses standards of technical quality of assessments.

The Iowa Department of Education's DSRAS document (Implementing a Districtwide Standards Referenced Assessment System, 1998) contains information about building high quality assessment systems.

All of these documents describe a clear need for assessments that measure the desired content standards consistently and fairly. They all argue for careful, systematic, thoughtful development of an assessment system that provides enough information to give a clear enough picture of student performance to guide instruction, with the quality (trustworthiness) of the assessment data being sufficient to make the appropriate level of decision. That is, the higher the stakes of the decision, the higher the quality of information the assessments should provide.

Stiggins, in his book *Student-Centered Classroom Assessment* (2001) presents similar concepts, but within the context of classroom assessment. His "Keys to Sound Assessment" concepts discuss clear targets (expectations for students), target-method match (alignment), sound sampling, accurate assessment, and freedom of bias and distortion (technical adequacy).

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS QUALITY COMPONENTS

1.) Define expectations for all students

Before an assessment system can be developed there must be a clear, common set of academic expectations for all students. This step represents the interface between curriculum development into assessment. In order to identify or develop an assessment system, all of the people involved in the education of the students must have a common understanding of their academic expectations as defined by the district's standards and benchmarks. Not only should the content be defined by the district's standards and benchmarks, but there also must be commonly held understanding of the performance

expectations. Performance standards describe the levels of acceptable performance. (See the handbook for the development of performance standards: Meeting the requirements of Title I – Hansche, 1998 for further information about performance standards.)

2.) Develop an assessment plan aligned with the standards

The state has clear expectations that districts develop an assessment system that measures all standards in reading and mathematics in three grade bands. This assessment plan must demonstrate the alignment of the assessments with the standards. The district needs to use a systematic method for determining that all standards are adequately covered by the assessments that make up the assessment system. If the alignment methods are to provide evidence of validity, there are several specific issues that must be addressed during the alignment process: comprehensiveness, emphasis, depth, match with performance standards, and clarity for users. An assessment system that is not aligned with standards and benchmarks will be less effective in informing teachers about progress of students towards achieving their standards and benchmarks.

3.) Determine technical adequacy

The district has an obligation to determine that its test instruments have sufficient technical qualities to support the kinds of decisions being made with them. This is required by the state if a test is to be used to establish or evaluate an annual improvement goal. Primary evidence of validity is gained from systematic alignment work as noted above. More advanced validity work may be considered as well. Reliability issues are attended to through things such as systematic, careful attention to reducing potential error due to test construction, administration and scoring procedures. Mathematical estimates of reliability can, and should be, calculated whenever possible. Attention should also be given to the relative fairness of tests for all students.

4.) Establish performance levels

In order for test users to adequately interpret the results, there must be commonly held understanding of the expected levels of performance on those tests. The district's performance standards will support the development of performance levels for tests that measure the standards. There are several processes that may be used to establish performance levels, ranging from arbitrary selection of cut points (not recommended) to elaborate statistical procedures. The key element is that districts clearly define what level of performance on a given test represents the minimum expected level to define proficient, and also what level of performance on the test represents advanced performance.

5.) Use of data

Results of districtwide assessments need to be used appropriately in making decisions. Measures with limited reliability and validity should not be used to inform decisions of any consequence. The district should carefully evaluate assessments used to inform higher stakes decisions. They should make sure that the measures have adequate reliability and validity to be trusted in making those decisions. Assessments with less adequate reliability and validity may be used to help support lower stakes decisions, but should be used with caution, preferably with other supporting data. Districts should examine longitudinal data on student performance to identify trends. Assessment results should be disaggregated by all appropriate subgroups to look for potential areas of inequity in achievement. Whenever possible, districts should examine multiple sources of data to evaluate performance.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) American Educational Resource Association Washington, D.C.

This book represents that standards that all test developers and users should follow in their practice. It was jointly developed by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education. It covers all aspects of test development, evaluation, documentation, fairness in testing, and testing applications. The book is very accessible, with clearly written standards and commentary.

Peer Reviewer Guidance for Evaluating Evidence of Final Assessments Under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1999) U.S. Department of Education

This document defines the standards by which state assessment systems will be evaluated by Title I. It covers issues related to alignment and technical adequacy, and developing, using and reporting results from assessments. Most of Iowa's districtwide assessment requirements can be traced back to Title I requirements. This document is useful in understanding how those requirements fit together.

Implementing a Districtwide Standards-Referenced Assessment System (1998) Iowa Department of Education: Assessment Literacy Task Group

This report, and its accompanying technical manual (1999) contain information about the conceptual and practical aspects of developing an assessment system. They were developed under the guidance of the Iowa Department of Education.

Stiggins, R. (2001) *Student Centered Classroom Assessment* Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Prentice Hall

The state of Iowa and Heartland AEA have used this text extensively in promoting assessment literacy issues. The text is intended to promote an understanding of basic assessment issues as they relate to classroom assessment. The concepts of reliability, validity, and fairness are addressed indirectly. Educators who are familiar with this text should be able to connect the concepts of high quality districtwide assessments to what they have learned about classroom assessments.

REFERENCES FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) American Educational Resource Association Washington, D.C.

Peer Reviewer Guidance for Evaluating Evidence of Final Assessments Under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1999) U.S. Department of Education

Implementing a Districtwide Standards-Referenced Assessment System (1998) Iowa Department of Education: Assessment Literacy Task Group

Stiggins, R. (2001) *Student Centered Classroom Assessment* Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Prentice Hall

Service 8:

Annual Progress Reports

DEFINITION OF ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

Chapter 12: General Accreditation Standards

Iowa code chapter 281.12 requires school districts to report annually to its local community about the state indicators of pupil progress, as well as other locally determined indicators [12.8(3)].

Heartland's assistance to districts will be aimed at the fulfillment of the requirements cited from Chapter 12 below:

12.8(3) Annual reporting requirements. A school or school district shall, at minimum, report annually to its local community about the progress on the state indicators and other locally determined indicators.

- a. State indicators. A school or school district shall collect data on the following indicators for reporting purposes:
 - 1.) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher reading status using at least three achievement levels and by gender, race, socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.
 - 2.) The percentage of all fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher mathematics status using at least three achievement levels and for gender, race socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.
 - 3.) The percentage of all eighth and eleventh grade students achieving proficient or higher science status using at least three achievement levels.
 - 4.) The percentage of students considered as dropouts for grades 7 to 12 by gender, race, students with disabilities, and other subgroups as required by state or federal law.
 - 5.) The percentage of high school seniors who intend to pursue postsecondary education/training.
 - 6.) The percentage of high school students achieving a score or status on a measure indicating probably postsecondary success.
This measure should be the measure used by the majority of students in the school, school district, or attendance center who plan to attend a postsecondary institution.
 - 7.) The percentage of high school graduates who complete a core program of four years of English-language arts and three or more years each of mathematics, science, and social studies.
- b. Annual Progress Report. Each school or school district shall submit an Annual Progress Report to its local community, its respective area education agency, and the department. That report shall be submitted to the department by September 15, 2000, and by September 15 every year thereafter. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information.

- 1.) Baseline data on at least one districtwide assessment for the state indicators described in subrule 12.8(3). Every year thereafter the school or school district shall compare the annual data collected with the baseline data. A school or school district is not required to report to the community about subgroup assessment results when a subgroup contains fewer than ten students at a grade level. A school or school district shall report districtwide assessment results for all enrolled and tuitioned-in students.
- 2.) Locally determined performance levels for at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. Student achievement levels as defined by the Iowa Testing Program may be used to fulfill this requirement.
- 3.) Long-range goals to improve student achievement in the areas of, but not limited to, reading, mathematics, and science.
- 4.) Annual improvement goals based on at least one districtwide assessment in, at a minimum, the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. One annual improvement goal may address all areas, or individual annual improvement goals for each area may be identified. When a school or school district does not meet its annual improvement goals for one year, it shall include in its Annual Progress Report the actions it will take to meet annual improvement goals for the next school year.
- 5.) Data on multiple assessments for reporting achievement for all students in the areas of reading and mathematics by September 15, 2001, and for science by September 15, 2003.
- 6.) Results by individual attendance centers, as appropriate, on the state indicators as stated in subrule 12.8(3) and any other locally determined factors or indicators. An attendance center, for reporting purposes, is a building that houses students in grade 4 or grade 8 or grade 11.
- 7.) Progress with the use of technology as required by Iowa Code section 295.3. This requirement does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools.
- 8.) School districts are encouraged to provide information on the reading proficiency of kindergarten through grade 3 students by grade level. However, all school districts receiving early intervention block grant funds shall report to the department the progress toward achieving their early intervention goals.
- 9.) Other reports of progress as the director of the department requires and other reporting requirements as the result of federal and state program consolidation. (Iowa Administrative Code, 281.12. p. 21-22).

Chapter 72 Accreditation Area Educational Agencies

The AEA's responsibilities to support schools in their annual progress reporting efforts are suggested several places in Chapter 72 of the Iowa Code. "The AEA shall deliver services for school-community planning. The AEA assists schools and school districts in assessing needs of all students, developing collaborative relationships among community agencies, establishing shared direction, implementing actions to meet goals, and reporting progress toward goals. [72.4(1)]"

The AEA's Annual Progress Report must include data from "school and school district annual progress reports" [72.10(2)a2]. Therefore, the AEA has a vested interest in supporting districts as they develop effective annual progress reports.

Department of Educational Technical Assistance Guide

The Technical Assistance Guide: 2000-01 Annual Progress Report (APR), Meeting and Exceeding Requirements May, 2001, document provided to schools by the Iowa Department of Education guides the completion of portions of the Annual Progress Report. This guidance document identifies criteria that do not meet requirements, meet requirements, or exceed requirements in long-range goals, annual improvement goals, multiple measures, as well as state and national comparisons of student achievement data. This document is to be used by districts as a self-assessment in the development of their Annual Progress Report.

The Technical Assistance for Comprehensive School Improvement, July, 1999, document provided to schools by the Department of Education discusses the Annual Progress Report:

The Annual Progress Report is a written summary of the accomplishments achieved in the previous school year, particularly those related to student learning. The report serves two functions:

- It is an articulation and accountability tool for institutional partners: the DE, the servicing AEA, and the school or school district.
- It serves as an insurance policy for students, parents, school personnel, and other local citizens by providing information that allows them to review school quality and to identify ways they can work together to accelerate student learning (p. 81).

The Technical Assistance manual reviews the content requirements for Annual Progress Reports in 281.12 and provides a rubric addressing reporting practices which exceed, meet or do not meet state requirements for reporting (p. 82-86).

LITERATURE ON ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act mandates that state education agencies develop standards on reading and math and implement an assessment system linked to the standards for all students in grades 3-8. The assessment system must allow for disaggregation of results at state, district, and school levels by gender, race, English proficiency, and migrant status. Schools receiving Title 1 funds must demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” in student progress.

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act contains 1994 ESEA requirement for assessments in reading and math at three grade spans (3-5, 6-9, 10-12) through the 2004-2005 school year. Requires annual assessments in reading and math for grades 3-8 beginning in 2005-2006, with the addition of science assessments in 2007-2008 (but only in same three grade spans as the 1994 law).

EXPLANATION OF ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING QUALITY COMPONENTS

The services provided by Heartland AEA will be to support and assist districts in their completion of the following requirements.

- 1.) Collect the following ITBS/ITED data at grades 4, 8, and 11 in the areas of reading, and math:
 - Trend Lines and Participation Rates
 - Achievement Levels and Proficiency
 - Gender Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11

- Race/Ethnicity Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11
 - Low Socioeconomic Status Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11
 - Students with Disabilities Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11
 - Migrant Students Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11
 - ELL Students Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 4, 8 and 11
- 2.) Collect the following ITBS/ITED data at grades 8 and 11 in the area of science:
 - Trend Lines and Participation Rates
 - Achievement Levels and Proficiency
 - Gender Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - Race/Ethnicity Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - Low Socioeconomic Status Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - Students with Disabilities Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - Migrant Students Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - ELL Students Disaggregated Achievement Data, Grades 8 and 11
 - 3.) Determine student state and national comparisons using ITBS and ITED for grades 4, 8 and 11 in reading and math.
 - 4.) Determine student state and national comparisons using ITBS and ITED for grades 8 and 11 in science.
 - 5.) Collect and report districtwide multiple assessment data in reading and math for grades 4, 8 and 11. Include 2 years of data from multiple measures indicating the trend line data, performance levels and disaggregated data.
 - 6.) Determine and report districtwide long-range and annual improvement goals. Report whether annual improvement goals were met or not met. Establish next year's annual improvement goals. If previous annual improvement goals were not met, indicate district actions to meet next year's goals.
 - 7.) Collect and report data on additional state indicators:
 - Dropout Data
 - Post-Secondary Data
 - Other Data
 - 8.) Report standard achievement results from multiple attendance centers. This requirement applies to districts that have more than one building for grades 4, 8, or 11.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Learner-centered schools that work for students in all kinds of communities and policies and practices that are needed to create these schools on a systemwide basis are thoroughly outlined in this book. The author shows that good schools best serve learners by allowing good teaching to flourish, reducing bureaucratic demands, favoring competence over procedures, nurturing and rewarding professional development, supporting curriculum and assessment that are relevant and challenging and stimulating inside-out change. Using in-depth teacher interviews and studies of many successful schools, the resource shows how to make learning the goal and the outcome for continuous improvement.

New York State Education Department. *Understanding Your Report Card, 2000: Guide to Elementary and Middle School Examinations*. Albany: State of New York, 2000.

The New York School Report Card is an important part of the effort to raise learning standards for all students. It is designed to provide information to the public on student performance and other measures of school and district performance. The 2000 report card has been changed to focus on measures of student progress on the new standards. The guide provides an overview of the changes, answers frequently asked questions, and contains descriptions of the state testing program and other performance measures. The Report Card contains an overview of academic performance, including results for some new tests and school and district statistics. The report compares the performance of a school with that of similar schools and compares the school district results with statewide results.

Oklahoma State Department of Education. *School District Report Card on Student Testing for the 1998-1999 School Year*. Oklahoma City: State of Oklahoma. 1999.

This report contains state and school district student testing results for the Oklahoma Testing Program for the 1998-1999 school year. Several benchmarks are reported, including the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests and American College Test Assessment results. The results are presented in a report card format, using graphs to provide a clear and understandable picture of each district's performance. The ITBS was given to all public school students in Oklahoma in grades 3 and 7. The OCCT are designed to measure student skill performance on the academic skills of the state's core curriculum and is given to students in grades 5, 8, and 11. These benchmarks provide information on how well students are meeting the academic standards established by the Oklahoma State Board of Education.

Schmoker, M. (1996). *Results: The Key to Continuous Improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schools, districts and classrooms that succeed show a strong relationship between processes and long-range and short-term results. It is this concept that the author emphasizes in his book. The author suggests key components that favor results and improvement: teamwork, goals and the selective and judicious use of data. Schools want better outcomes yet have avoided the task of analyzing what they are doing against the results they are getting. The book also shares specific success stories about schools and districts that took action on the key components and got results. Schmoker helps us understand the need to maximize the impact of using results that will promote continuous school improvement. This is an excellent resource for all educators involved in the process of school improvement.

Wahlstrom, D. D. (1999). *Using Data to Improve Student Achievement*. Virginia Beach, VA: Successline.

All educators will find this resource helpful to them as they consider the model for using data to improve student achievement set forth by the author. The model includes four steps: collect data, organize data, analyze data and use data. These steps help lead others toward improvement. Using the acronym LEAD the author encourages the following: Learn everything you can about your school or district, ask questions and collect, organize and analyze data. Then have Expectations which means that the most difficult question must be asked: Does your data reflect our

expectations? Next there needs to be Alternatives which sets forth the following question: What else do you need to study to get clues about what to change? And what resources might be available? Finally you must Decide, Dream and Design what you are going to do and commit it to your school improvement plan. The resource is filled with userfriendly ideas to help educators feel comfortable in using data to make decisions.

Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

This book includes both the theory and practice of educational assessment. It presents principles of design, standards for assessment and justification for providing different approaches to assessing students. It also includes design templates, scoring rubrics and assessment tasks. The book is a good resource for districts and schools to use not only in gaining new knowledge about assessment but in gaining practical ideas for educators so that they may be more results focused and data driven.

REFERENCES FOR ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

Bernhardt, V.L. (1998). *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The Right to Learn: A Blueprint for Creating Schools That Work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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Wahlstrom, D.D. (1999). *Using Data for School Improvement and Decision Making* (ASCD conference handouts). Virginia Beach, VA: Successline.

Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.