

Pattonville School District

School Improvement Team Handbook (Fall 2004)

Purpose

School Improvement Plans are developed by every school building community for the purpose of achieving CSIP Goal 1: *Students demonstrate significant improvement in their understanding and application of the Show-Me Standards.*

Parameters

School Improvement Plans are developed through a process called “participatory management” which engages parents, staff, students and the community in the sharing of authority and responsibility for improving student achievement. This process is guided by the following Board of Education Parameters:

1. No plan can be approved unless you can show it supports the district’s purpose and CSIP plan.
2. Must have support of your own school community.
3. Plan must be generally fiscally neutral.
4. Must discuss plan with feeder and receiving schools/organization before moving forward.
5. What research supports your plan.
6. Plan to evaluate plan annually.
7. No plan will be accepted unless legally, ethically, and morally correct.

Team Membership

Teams are composed of at least 50% parents/community members/students who are not employees of the district. Each team determines the number of members. Team membership is reviewed annually at the start of each school year to ensure compliance with the 50% rule. Teams should have a staggered rotation schedule that determines when members move on and off of the team.

Team Responsibilities

Working within the Board of Education Parameters and the District Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (see pages 7 and 8), school improvement teams serve as the Steering Committee for improvement efforts at their school. The teams are responsible for developing their School's Improvement Plan, monitoring progress on the action steps, and updating the plan at least every two years. This process includes evaluating each action step to determine its contribution to achieving Goal 1 and its related targets. In addition, school improvement plans are to be inclusive of district-wide improvement efforts (e.g. Literacy Project/Balanced Literacy) and supportive of student learning as evidenced in the district curriculum and assessments. Specifically, School Improvement Teams research and recommend best practices related to the following areas:

- Instruction: strategies that lead to improved student performance on Missouri's Show-Me Standards, are consistent with district-wide expectations, and promote student responsibility for learning.
- Structure: big picture school design that promotes student achievement and responsibility (e.g. time for professional development, alternative delivery strategies such as school within a school, multiage or looping).
- Climate: the affective domain that promotes relationship building and defines the school as a caring community for students, parents, staff and community.

Research for developing and updating School Improvement Plans derives from multiple sources, including: journals, articles, standardized testing data, classroom assessment data which does not identify the student, site visits, and other sources deemed appropriate by the team. Frequently, school research does not translate into hard scientific data that conclusively proves a direct relationship between a specific strategy and improved student achievement; however, strategies that teams choose should be consistent with literature and research studies that point toward improvements in student achievement and/or student responsibility.

School Improvement Teams are also responsible for making sure that their plan includes professional development that supports successful implementation of the action steps identified in their plan. The professional development plan should address what will be learned (content), when and

how learning will occur (process and time), who will be involved in the training (audience) and how effectiveness of the training will be measured.

Principal's Authority

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the School Improvement Plan is implemented. The principal has authority (within district policy/procedures and state/federal statutes) over the following areas in his/her building:

- School Structure (e.g. scheduling)
- Finance (budget within allocation)
- Staffing (within allocation)
- Discipline (at the level of office referral)
- Professional Development (implementation)
- Staff Evaluation

The Planning Process

To be effective School Improvement Teams need a working set of procedures that govern their behavior. These procedures include having trained **facilitators**, **keeping careful minutes** of the team's work, using a **process observer**, defining **consensus**, having strategies for **pyramiding** with the community, and having guidelines for **community input** during the school improvement team meetings. Teams may wish to formalize these processes in the form of **by-laws**.

Facilitator(s) – a parent and staff member who, along with the principal: design the meeting agenda, ensure that minutes are approved and provided to the school community, help the team monitor progress on action steps, and guide research on future improvement efforts.

Keeper of the Minutes – Records and distributes meeting minutes, records action items and persons responsible and provides a verbal summary at the conclusion of the meetings. The keeper will receive amendments prior to the meeting and inform membership of those amendments so that all members have accurate information.

Process Observer – a committee member who observes the interactions of the group during the meeting and reports back to the group what was said, the level of participation, and the tone of the meeting.

Consensus – a group decision (which some members may not feel is the best decision, but which they can all live with, support, and commit themselves not to undermine) arrived at without voting. Through the process, all issues are discussed completely, all members feel they have been adequately heard, and everyone has equal power and responsibility.

Pyramiding - each member of the council agrees to interact with three people not on the council to acquire feed back about topics being discussed at council meetings. This involves each member asking a specific question(s) and reporting back what they found out at the next team meeting, web site: (posting minutes and agendas list members, post plan), electronic messaging, special e-mail for school improvement team, principals newsletters (include summary of meeting and list members), updates at staff meetings.

Community Input – school improvement team meetings are open to the public. Teams may choose to adopt processes whereby community members who are not members of the team have an opportunity to make comments. This choice is at the discretion of each team.

By-Laws – written procedures that guide how a school improvement team in how they organize and conduct their work.

MAP Implementation Plan

While school improvement teams deal with big picture planning, schools must have the flexibility to make short-term adjustments based on new information. MAP Implementation Plans are designed to meet this need. Each fall principals and school staff evaluate data from the Missouri Assessment Program and other standardized tests to identify areas of strength and determine areas of relative weakness. Often these data will be consistent with action steps identified in School Improvement Plan; however, when the data justify increased focus in specific instructional areas principals are expected to work with staff to adjust instruction to meet those needs.

MAP Implementation Plans address the following.

- Longitudinal performance summary from MAP and CTB Terra Nova data by grade level for the whole group and subgroups (minority, IEP, ESOL, gifted/talented).
- Identification of specific learning areas that need increased instructional focus for the whole group and for each subgroup with action steps that will be taken to address the areas of focus.
- Strategies to address student motivation and test environment.
- Professional development plans for the November data day.

Board Approval of School Improvement Plans

The Board of Education approves updated School Improvement Plans at least every two years. School Improvement Teams work with the Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Assessment to ensure that plans meet expectations outlined in the School Improvement Plan Approval Form (next page). Prior to going the Board of Education for approval the School Improvement Plan Update must be signed by the Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Assessment, and the Superintendent.

Updating the Your School Improvement Plan: Required Elements

CSIP Goal 1 Target A

Action Step 2 – Building representatives report on student achievement data to Board of Education (Process – is not an action step)

Action Step 4 - Increase parent involvement with emphasis on literacy.

Action Step 5 - Study and implement research-based strategies for complex reasoning, differentiated instruction, reading and writing across the curriculum, and building relationships with students and parents to address reading, mathematics and science proficiencies and deficiencies, especially for disaggregated student groups.

Action Step 6 - Support student needs at transition points from pre-school to elementary, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school, and high school to post-secondary

CSIP Goal 1 Target B

Action Step 1 - Analyze school climate to determine positive/negative contributions to Indicators. Study will include students, parents and staff.

Action Step Develop and implement strategies that improve student responsibility, especially decision making. Strategy development should involve students, parents and staff

CSIP Goal 2 Target A (See page 8 for full details)

Action Step 6 - School Improvement Teams investigate strategies for improving student achievement through the use of technology