

## Improving Programs – Increasing Results: A Step-by-Step Process

The step-by-step process outlined below will enable you to reflect on data results for programs and then focus on using the results to improve students' learning. You will base decisions for program improvement on data by focusing on measurable, observable results. (See Program Improvement Instrument for connections to the Step-by-Step Process, especially Section 7, Program Improvement Process and Plan on page 10.)

### Step 1. Look at the Performance Results for All Programs (Core Indicators of Performance/Standards & Measures).

- a. Document student outcomes for the Core Indicators of Performance. Log on to the Perkins Accountability Reports on the Perkins Portal, <http://www.state.sd.us/applications/DP42LaunchPad/Logon.aspx>.
- b. Assess outcomes for each subgroup (demographic and special population groups)
- c. Compare within groups and among groups.
- d. What do you see? What do you think it means? Why are there differences? What are some solutions for the differences? How do subgroups compare to the whole? How do they compare to state level data?
- e. Pinpoint trends over the last two years. Do the gaps grow or shrink?
- f. Display your findings graphically. Consider a line graph, bar graph, or pie chart.
- g. Determine reasonable benchmarks for improvement. Should performance go up .25% per year? .50% per year? .75% per year? 1.00%? What is reasonable given the circumstances of programs and students?
- h. Compare and document at least two years of performance.

### Step 2. Identify Causes for Disparities and Gaps in the Performance Data.

- a. What are the critical **direct** causes? At this point in the process, do not consider indirect causes or those over which you have little or no control.
- b. What causes are within your control?
- c. Look at the possible causes that you can affect.
- d. Why do performance problems exist?
- e. What cause should you address first?

### **Step 3. Determine and Implement Possible Solutions.**

- a. Where can you identify potential improvement strategies and solutions?
- b. What strategies do you already use? What strategies may be already present in a school's improvement plan? Do you have colleagues who could assist you with strategies they have found successful?
- c. Analyze possible solutions that can impact the causes you identified in **Step 2** above.

### **Step 4. Evaluate Solutions.**

- a. Monitor student and program performance to assess how well the improvement strategy or strategies are working. Do some work better than others? Why?
- b. Allow ample time for the strategy/strategies to work.
- c. If acceptable gains are not evident, try another possible solution.
- d. Consider how you can use Perkins funds to improve program performance and student achievement. Are program goals reflected in the request for Perkins funds?

### **Step 5. Continue the cycle described in Steps 1-4. The result will be continuous program improvement and increased student learning.**