

South Dakota District Self-Reflection to Support School Improvement

The South Dakota District Self-Reflection is based on the *Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement* (Center on School Turnaround, 2017). South Dakota District Self-Reflection is a customized version of Tool C: LEA Self-Reflection to Support School Improvement found in *Utilizing Integrated Resources to Implement School and District Improvement Cycle and Supports* (CCSSO, 2017). Specific terminology was changed to align terminology currently used by the South Dakota Department of Education, but the intent and focus was retained. Key differences are reflected in the realignment of the domains and elements to correspond to the, school level, South Dakota Comprehensive Needs Assessment (SD CNA). Also, the number of indicators under each element was reduced and, in some cases, new indicators were developed and added.

The self-reflection guides a District through examining elements in their performance management system with a strong focus on supporting school improvement. The self-reflection should be completed (individually) by the leadership team members, including key personnel and stakeholders. Sufficient time should be given to allow for honest discussions, examination of evidence, and consensus building on the current state of each element. The self-reflection can be used to guide a district level needs assessment and develop a plan to drive the districts support efforts.

To use the self-reflection, each team member should independently read the element description, review the performance levels, circle or highlight the appropriate performance level, and then document evidence of performance (if possible). Then note the strengths and weaknesses for each of the domains and answer the open response questions. Once each team member has completed the self-reflection, review the results together.

Note: If the results are sensitive or controversial, the assigned School Success Facilitator could assemble the feedback and share the aggregate results from the entire team.

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1. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
1.a. Prioritize improvement and communicate urgency					
1a1. A collaborative and active district leadership team is established to address the urgency of school improvement.	District leadership team is comprised of a superintendent and/or assistant superintendent.	And has representatives from key roles across the District.	And has ongoing meetings with norms and processes to foster collaboration and clear decision-making.	And at every meeting, monitors improvement progress and makes timely adjustments to address District and school improvement.	
1a2. The District leadership team sets the overall strategic direction (vision, mission, student focused goals, and goal performance measures) to guide improvement work.	The District leadership team sets a direction with the stated vision and mission.	And includes focused goals and goal performance measures that are relevant to school improvement.	And ensure personnel and team members know and can articulate the District's direction and how their work supports the direction.	And uses the direction, determined by a district needs assessment, to align all projects, initiatives, and programs to address District and school improvement.	
1b. Monitor short-and long-term goals					
1b1. The District has developed milestones to gauge progress on strategies.	Milestones are developed.	And milestones include aligned strategies to support school improvement.	And strategies are implemented.	And strategies include timelines, outcomes, resources, and responsible staff.	
1b2. The District Leadership Team monitors implementation of the school improvement plans and makes adjustments in personnel, programs,	School improvement plans are reviewed.	And school improvement plans are reviewed by the district leadership team and include strategies that align with the school's	And implementation data are used to make timely adjustments in personnel, programs, policies, and methods to keep progress on track.	And monitor to determine when swift interventions are needed to address declining progress.	

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Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
policies, and methods as needed to keep the effort on track.		comprehensive needs assessment.			
1c. Customize and target supports to meet needs					
1c1. The District has a differentiated system of support to address school improvement needs.	A system of support is in place.	And reflects effective practices to support school improvement.	And includes differentiation in methodology, frequency, duration, and resources to address each school's improvement needs.	And includes a review of implementation data in response to supports, so needed adjustments can be made.	
1c2. The District allows school leaders reasonable autonomy to reallocate resources and make decisions to address school priorities that align with district goals.	Clear district expectations for school improvement are communicated.	And allows autonomy for leadership decision making and resource allocation.	And addresses improvement priorities.	And includes the examination of the effectiveness of reallocations and decisions so needed adjustments can be made.	
Identify Strengths and Weaknesses in Effective Leadership					
<p>What element(s) of effective leadership do we need to focus on for improvement? Why?</p> <p>What specific steps can the district take to support effective leadership in the school improvement process?</p>					

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2. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
2a. Creating, implementing and monitoring curriculum					
2a1. The District has set high academic standards and ensures access to rigorous standards-based curricula.	Standards have been adopted.	And a curriculum process is in place to ensure alignment to the intent and rigor of the standards.	And professional learning processes are in place for teachers to implement curricular materials.	And instructional meetings are conducted to minimize and address learning gaps and overlaps.	
2b. Implementation of evidence-based instruction					
2b1. There is a district-wide direction regarding quality evidence-based instruction.	The district assists schools with developing school improvement plans that align to the established district-wide instructional direction.	And the district provides schools with time, support, and resources to implement their school improvement plans.	And the district monitors implementation and provides timely feedback.	And the district assists the schools in evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the evidence-based instructional direction.	
2c. Remove barriers and provide opportunities					
2c1. The district productively manages school operations and resources (i.e. time, schedule, funding, and staffing) to achieve learning priorities.	District operations and resource allocations are reviewed to identify barriers to student and staff learning.	And problem solves and develops plans to address the barriers to student and staff learning.	And implement plans to address the barriers to student and staff learning.	And uses data to monitor implementation effectiveness and make adjustments accordingly.	

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Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
2d. Analyze and respond to student learning needs					
2d1. The District provides protocols to assist teachers to drill down on individual student needs and create instructional action plans aligned to those needs.	District protocols and procedures to drill down on individual student needs are in place.	And professional learning is provided on the analysis of data and the creation of instructional plans to address individual student needs.	And provides guidance on the implementation of data-based instructional plans and on progress monitoring of student learning.	And supports and monitors needed instructional adjustments to plan next steps.	
2d2. The District provides flexibility and supports in creatively using instructional time to meet the learning needs of students.	Actively explores creative ways to extend instructional learning time to address student needs.	And supports schools in creatively extending and maximizing instructional time to address student needs.	And provides guidance on high quality instruction during extended learning time.	And holds schools accountable for providing high quality instruction during the extended learning times.	
<p>Identify Strengths and Weaknesses in Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p>What specific steps might the district take to support schools in promoting effective practices and strategies teachers use to impact student learning?</p> <p>What specific steps can the district take to support curriculum and instruction?</p>					

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3. TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
3a. Recruit, develop, retain, & sustain talent					
3a1. The District operates and communicates an explicit system of procedures and protocols for recruiting, evaluating, and providing incentives.	There are recruitment, evaluation, and incentive procedures.	And procedures and protocols are explicit.	And the procedures and protocols are clearly communicated and consistently used.	And procedures and protocols are based on a data-driven system.	
3a2. The District and schools work collaboratively to implement programs to support new teachers and leaders in their first years of teaching and leading.	An orientation is provided.	And new teacher and leader development programs are in place.	And includes collaboration with schools and other stakeholders to implement and periodically review the development programs.	And includes differentiated support for new teachers and leaders in their first years of teaching and leading.	
3b. Targeted professional learning opportunities					
3b1. The District professional learning criteria are consistently implemented to ensure high quality professional learning.	Professional learning criteria is in place.	And personnel understand and can articulate the criteria.	And the criteria are consistently used to provide high quality professional learning on effective practices for schools.	And the District supports schools in using professional learning criteria to select and provide high quality, relevant professional learning.	
3b2. The District aligns professional learning with identified needs, based on personnel	Professional learning is based on overall District needs.	And school and student performance data are used to determine	And personnel evaluation data are used to determine professional learning.	And professional learning is prioritized and implemented based on school and	

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4. FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURE

Element	Consistently Low Performance	Basic Performance	Moderate Performance	Consistently High Performance	Evidence
4a. Build strong community intensely focused on student learning					
4a1. Ongoing conversations between District and school personnel and families are candid, supportive, and flow in both directions and reflect on student learning.	Avenues for two-way communication between District and school personnel and families are in place.	And include ongoing communication between District, school personnel and families.	Such communication is specific, candid and supportive of identified schools, their students, and their families.	And information from the two-way communication is used to further strengthen District, school, and family relationships.	
4b. Solicit and act upon stakeholder input					
4b1. Stakeholder perceptions are gathered and considered when identifying priorities and improving the underlying conditions that contribute to school climate issues.	A process to gather stakeholder perceptions for use in decision making is established.	And includes a process to summarize stakeholder perceptions necessary to improve District and school climate.	And provides assistance to schools to determine priorities that contribute to school climate issues.	And includes resources to implement evidence-based approaches to improve school climate issues.	
4b2. Acknowledge and respond to constructive feedback, suggestions, and criticism.	Constructive feedback, suggestions, and criticism are gathered by stakeholder input.	And are used to improve school improvement efforts.	And is used to assist schools in documenting and responding to feedback, suggestions and criticism.	And includes collaborating with schools to implement improvement actions based on the feedback, suggestions and criticism.	
4c. Engage students and families in pursuing educational goals					
4c1. Provide students with opportunities to connect their personal strengths and learning in	District assists teachers to help students connect learning with their	And includes resources to community-based learning	And support is provided to schools in utilizing the instructional guidance	And assists schools in monitoring the use and results of student learning in community-	

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school with their interests and aspirations.	interests and aspirations.	opportunities for students to connect their learning with their interests and aspirations.	to increase student learning with their individual interests and aspirations.	based learning opportunities to improve and expand opportunities.	
4c2. Meaningfully engage parents in their child’s learning, progress, interests, and long-term goals.	Resources are available to parents on how to engage your child’s learning for long-term goals.	And includes resources assessments, interest inventories, and career and college information.	And professional learning is provided to schools on the use of the resources to increase parent engagement in their child’s learning.	And includes support to collect and use data to inform effective practices to improve family engagement.	
<p>Identify Strengths and Weaknesses in Family, Community, and Culture.</p> <p>How is your district including families to improve culture and climate?</p> <p>What areas should our district focus on for schools to improve climate and culture?</p>					