

Comprehensive District Education Planning

The Journey



2000-2001

COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT EDUCATION PLANNING

The Journey

Background

Many school districts in New York State already engage in some type of strategic or comprehensive planning. To do so has become even more important with the new higher learning standards and graduation requirements. Planning is critical if students are to meet or exceed these standards. But planning, whether it is CDEP or some other system, is **a process, not a single product or document**. Therefore, while we lay out a process that helps the district develop a document, it is important to remember that the district is committing to a long-term process for continually evaluating its progress in meeting its stated goals.

Goal

The district goal is to develop a Comprehensive District Education Plan (CDEP) and a continuous planning process that focuses school district energy and resources on analyzing data to improve student achievement.

A Brief History

In 1996-97, several members of the Staff and Curriculum Development Network (SCDN) urged the State Education Department to consider developing comprehensive planning to replace some or all of the plans that school districts are required to submit to the State. After careful consideration the Department decided to work with field representatives to develop a comprehensive planning process and to pilot it beginning in February 1998. Eighty-five districts expressed an interest in participating in the pilot. At the same time, The New York City Board of Education decided that all districts in New York City should do comprehensive planning and submit their plans by summer 1998. Thirty-three districts outside of New York City also submitted completed plans that were approved in September 1998.

Several districts in the initial pilot group decided to spend 1998-99 developing their first plan. Additional districts joined the pilot in fall 1998 and in the summer of 1999, 90 districts submitted new or revised CDEP. The pilot continued during the 1999-2000 school year. During the summer 2000 about 150 districts have submitted or plan to submit a CDEP.

Working together the districts that are involved in the pilot and the Department have learned a great deal about what parts of the planning process are successful and what parts need further refinement. The areas that require additional work by the Department and the participating districts are “data analysis,” “root cause analysis” and “incorporating required plans.” This guidance document attempts to provide additional direction in each of these areas. Further information will be shared with pilot districts as it is developed.

What We Have Learned

- Comprehensive planning is a new way of doing business for both the school district and the Department.
- Comprehensive planning is hard work.
- Leadership commitment is critical to comprehensive planning.
- Comprehensive planning provides the school district with 1) a process to improve student achievement and 2) a tool to change school culture.
- The comprehensive planning process is a continuous improvement process, not a one-time product.
- Most school districts do not systematically examine data and use it to drive decision-making and to establish priorities.
- Using data correctly is a powerful planning tool.
- Planning focuses district resources on student learning.
- Districts that use an outside facilitator to guide the process develop better comprehensive plans.
- Comprehensive planning makes districts more effective.
- Planning increases collaboration and coordination.

Comprehensive Planning

Currently, local school districts must develop and implement many separate education plans to comply with State and federal statutes. If school districts are to focus their available resources in an efficient and effective manner to help all students achieve the new, high learning standards; it is critical that they engage in some form of comprehensive education planning. This guidance document outlines one planning process that a district may use.

Comprehensive planning is a collaborative tool that SED is making available to districts for improvement of student achievement. The CDEP pilot has shown that comprehensive planning is a whole new way for a school district to do business if it honestly embraces the process. Comprehensive plans are not shelf art. They should be living documents that inform all school decisions that focus on student achievement.

A comprehensive district education planning process will:

- Interweave some plans districts previously produced to create one plan focused on improving student achievement,
- Be based on results-oriented data that are available through the School Report Card, the annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the educational status of schools, “New York The State of Learning” (commonly known as “the Chapter 655 Report”), the Basic Educational Data System (BEDS), and other local data sources,
- Ensure the district provides services for all students from early childhood through adult,
- Use a school improvement committee that is representative of the district to engage the public in a discussion focused on results,

- Move towards aligning all funding streams and other resources toward the resolution of specific needs as identified by the data and by root cause analysis,
- Be used by building school improvement² committees as a basis for developing building, needs-based, improvement plans,
- Indicate how student services and entitlements required by federal and State statutes will be guaranteed, and
- Make use of “best practices” and current research to determine strategies to resolve identified needs.

The Department, like local school districts, is committed to the effective and efficient use of resources. As part of a strategic partnership with school districts, the Department, when appropriate, will use the comprehensive district education plan as the formal context to:

- Reduce the number of other required plans over time;
- Make State and federal resource allocation decisions;
- Further refine the School Report Card;
- Try to simplify State and federal compliance requirements while minimizing the number of audit findings;
- Advocate for the single comprehensive plan in any new or amended state or federal legislation.

This document provides guidance on developing a Comprehensive District Education Plan (CDEP). The question frequently arises about the relationship of CDEP and building plans. The Comprehensive District Education Plan and the resulting school building plans are interrelated and living documents, which should be continually referred to and updated at least annually. These plans must address the needs of all students rather than depending upon separate plans for separate populations that result in fragmented services and increased paperwork. The documents should reinforce one another and the CDEP should certainly include and/or refer to areas in need of improvement identified in building plans.

The comprehensive plan must demonstrate how local, State, and federal resources will be used in a coordinated fashion to meet student needs. Defining the education program for all students and indicating how supplemental resources will be used to enhance outcomes for specific groups of students will aid schools in meeting the “supplement, not supplant” requirements.

Readiness

During the three-year CDEP pilot, we have learned that districts need to be ready to engage in comprehensive planning. Some of the questions to ask to determine if your district is ready are:

- Are the superintendent and the Board of Education supportive of comprehensive planning and committed to systemic change in the district?
- Do they understand that comprehensive planning is a new way to do business; it is not an add-on?

- Do they recognize and agree that the district must change?
- Do they believe that all students must meet the new, higher standards?
- Are they committed to using data to drive decision-making?

If the leaders cannot answer all these questions affirmatively, they are not ready to engage in comprehensive planning.

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Typically districts that are not ready if they are not receptive to the idea of engaging in a process that will bring about systemic change. They are unwilling to try to do things in a new way. Some districts are not able to draw their many constituencies together. Districts in this position must address their fundamental problems before they begin planning.

A Simple Planning Model

The planning model that is described below is designed to answer the five simple questions that drive most planning. They are:

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|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Where do we want to go? | (key indicators) |
| 2. Where are we now? | (data) |
| 3. What is stopping us from getting there? | (root causes) |
| 4. How do we overcome what is stopping us? | (strategies) |
| 5. How do we implement our strategies? | (action planning) |
| 6. How are we doing? | (evaluation) |

Steps in the Planning Process

The Comprehensive District Education Planning process has five steps:

1. Background/Demographics
2. Initial Data Analysis
3. Root Cause Analysis
4. Implementation Plan
5. Assessing and reporting results.

Each step involves more than one item. The planning team will not necessarily move forward in a linear fashion, completing one step before moving on to the next. Good planning is cyclical and it is never finished.

STEP 1: Background/Demographics

A. What the District Will Do

1. Establish its CDEP committee and gather basic data
2. Vision—review, revise or create.
3. Mission—review, revise or create.
4. Beliefs—review, revise or create.
5. District Statement/Influencing Factors

Districts are urged to use clear, concise language that a person who is not part of the education establishment can understand. Some contain “educationese,” unexplained abbreviations, and other unclear items that detract from the plan.

B. Guidance for Items Above

1. Establish a committee and prepare for the first meeting.

Districts must begin comprehensive planning carefully. Once the leadership has made the commitment to it, the district should decide who is responsible for keeping the planning effort on track. Usually the Superintendent needs to lead the district effort; however, he or she may decide to delegate this responsibility. What is important is that everyone understands who is responsible.

Districts that use a trained facilitator usually produce better plans than those do that do not do so. Trained facilitators can keep the district planning committee focused and make planning sessions more productive. The district can use an internal facilitator if it has one, it can hire a professional facilitator, or it can ask its BOCES if it has staff who are trained as CDEP facilitators. As part of the CDEP effort, the Department and the CDEP technical assistance center have held three training sessions for CDEP facilitators. Most, but not all, BOCES have facilitators. Whomever the district chooses as a facilitator, he or she should be brought in at the beginning of the process and be part of the planning for team formation and the first meeting.

Each district will have to decide how it wants to use its facilitator after the initial meeting. He or she can be involved in the entire process, which is the preferred model. Or the facilitator may only be used occasionally when the district hits stumbling blocks. A large district may want to use multiple facilitators.

The next--and most critical--preparatory step is the formation of the CDEP planning committee. The planning committee must be broadly representative of the district's constituencies. The district may decide to use its CR 100.11 Shared Decision-Making Committee. If that Committee is not used, the CDEP committee membership should be broadly representative of all building levels, administrators, teachers, students, parents, community representatives, higher education, and other stakeholders. The Superintendent should be a committee member even if s/he is unable to attend all meetings. The Superintendent's commitment to the process is critical. Teacher membership should reflect all grade levels and subject specialties. Parent representatives should reflect the student population. The District should consider having school board members and students on the Committee.

The district should identify resources to support its comprehensive planning initiative. These might include release time for teachers who are on the committee, refreshments for meetings, costs associated with data analysis tool such as COGNOS, hiring people to help with data analysis, the cost of a facilitator, etc. The district should decide how it will keep committee members informed about meetings, of work accomplished by subcommittees, etc. The pilot has shown that districts do not do enough to inform members of the school community, much less the wider community, of the development of their plans. In many instances, teachers and others whose work should be affected by the planning efforts are unaware of them. Therefore, a solid, district wide communication plan needs to be developed at the initial stages.

District staff should gather critical data and do some basic data analysis and preparation prior to the meeting. Basic data may include the school report card; basic demographic data on ethnicity, non-English speaking, poverty, free and reduced lunch, attendance, and truancy data; and other data that provide a snapshot of the district’s students and their performance. For some districts, this data is already assembled and analyzed; for others this is a difficult and time-consuming process. Having this data is critical so that all of the planning team members have a shared understanding of the district, its students, and their achievement.

After these basic materials are assembled, the district is ready to schedule the first team meeting. The meeting should be long enough for the team members to become acquainted, to be provided with an overview of the planning process and the work they are being asked to do, and be provided the basic data the district has assembled.

The Committee should review the basic data and then turn its attention to reviewing, revising or creating the district’s vision, mission and beliefs.

2. Vision – review, revise, or create

The vision statement defines the desired future state of improved teaching and learning. To develop a vision the team determines the results, behaviors and other characteristics the school district needs to have in the future taking into account trends in improving student achievement. The vision should be updated as the needs of the district change. All committee members should agree that the vision statement is appropriate. If the district already has a vision statement, the committee should review it, revise it if necessary, and again get committee buy-in.

3. Mission – review, revise or create

The mission statement defines the district’s identity and purpose. In developing a mission statement, the team asks: (a) who are we; (b) what are we; (c) what will we do; (d) whom do we serve; and (e) why do we exist. When the team has addressed each of these questions, the answers can be inserted in the following framework:

The	(a)
Is	(b)
That	(c)
For	(d)
To	(e)

The best mission statements are short and easily remembered. Ideally, everyone in the district should know the district's mission statement. As was the case with the vision statement, if the district agrees on its already developed mission statement, that is fine. In either case, buy-in by all committee members is critical.

4. Beliefs – review, revise, or create

Belief statements are the assumptions, attitudes, and goals held strongly by members of the district. Spelling them out gives the district team a shared understanding of the items that are most important to the district.

Taken together, the vision, mission and belief statements provide the framework for the district to define the expected condition of the of the teaching/learning environment that the community agrees to attain. It is anticipated that most districts already have vision/mission statements. If the district does not, it should not get so involved in developing these statements that it cannot move forward. Planning is not linear; Steps I, II and III can be worked on concurrently.

5. District Statement/Influencing Factors

The district statement affords the district the opportunity to set forth any special or unique aspects of the school community that might further clarify or influence the context of the plan. It should provide any person who reads the plan with enough information about the district so that the reader is able to understand what the district is like and what it is trying to accomplish. Some basic demographic information such as the district's size, number of buildings, how the buildings are configured, should be included as well as the local and regional environment, socio-economic factors, business and industry, special needs, connections with the higher education community, outcomes of previous reviews if, for example, the district has a SURR school, and the amount of local, State and federal funds.

The district statement should describe how the district would use its mission to bring all stakeholders to a common understanding of what the district wants to achieve.

C. What the District Will Include in the Written Plan

1. Committee Membership
2. Vision
3. Mission
4. Beliefs
5. District Statement/Influencing Factors

The committee is encouraged to review these items frequently as it moves forward to work on other steps in its planning process.

STEP 2: Data Analysis

A. What the District Will Do

1. Identify district gaps in relation to key indicators
2. Identify successes in relation to key indicators
3. Prioritize gaps
4. Provide a rationale for prioritization of gaps
5. Identify data that were used
6. Explain how data were used.

B. Guidance for Items Above

1. Identify district gaps in relation to key indicators

The planning committee needs to study carefully the district data that has been assembled. It should examine its socio-economic and ethnicity data to get a picture of the student body. The committee should study the school report card data and identify areas where the district is not meeting State standards.

- a) What types of data should the district use?

There are four kinds of data that the district should consider: perception data, performance data, process data and demographic data. Performance and demographic data are readily available. Perception data and process data are unique to each district and may be harder for the district to identify. But is important to recognize that perception data like teacher observation is valid data and should be considered.

The new emphasis on all students meeting or exceeding the State learning standards and on performance on certain high stakes tests mean that districts need the capacity to analyze student data. Both the State and the Regional Information Centers (RICs) are trying to increase their capacity to provide better data. Some individual districts have contracted with a vendor for a student management system. That vendor may be able to help the districts with data. Clearly, all parties must work together to improve the quantity and quality of data available to schools and school districts.

Adequate data analysis is essential to the development of a comprehensive plan. To date, this has been difficult for many of the districts that have engaged in the planning process. Many districts do not have a history of carefully analyzing the data they collect, and particularly of “drilling down” into the data to disaggregate it. In order to identify root causes and select the correct strategies to remediate areas of weakness, data must be manipulated adequately. Districts may want to develop an individual student database so that they can try to determine if students with certain characteristics are most likely to fail to meet the new learning standards. At a minimum, the district should be able to look at the performance of groups that are at risk such as LEP, low-income, or minority students. Are students in one classroom performing at a lower level than students in other classrooms in that grade? Why? Even considering simple questions like these can help the district identify problem areas.

One very important data source is the “School/District Data Verification Report’ that the Department issues to every district annually to verify district data before the school report cards are made public. This report disaggregates test score data on the major State assessments and provides a wealth of information that the district can use to see where its students are not performing adequately.

b) What resources are available to help?

There are several books districts may want to consult to strengthen their ability to analyze data:

Bernhardt, Victoria. Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement. 1998. Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Larchmont, NY 10538

Bernhardt, Victoria. Designing and Using Databases for School Improvement. 2000. Eye on Education, 6 Depot Way West, Larchmont, NY 10538

Holcomb, Edie L. Getting Excited About Data, How to Combine People, Passion, and Proof. 1999. Corwin Press, Inc. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, E-mail: order@corwinpress.com.

Love, Nancy. Using Data—Getting Results: Collaborative Inquiry for School-Based Mathematics and Science Reform. 2000. Published by TERC, notebook format.

Preskill, Hallie and Torres, Rosalie T. Evaluative Inquiry for Learning in Organizations. 1999 Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

Senge, Peter M. The Fifth Discipline” The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. 1990 Doubleday, New York.

Data analysis is not a one-time activity. It will continue throughout the planning process. Each district will have to analyze a lot of data before it identifies gaps, and particularly before it determines root causes. As part of its initial data analysis the district may identify additional data that it thinks it needs but does not currently have. It may want to develop strategies to get the data or to assign responsibility for gathering it.

This initial or foundational data analysis should provide sufficient information so that the committee can decide what outcomes it wants for the district’s students. High performing districts may decide that they want to set outcome standards above those established by the State. For example, they may want 90 % of their students to perform at levels 3 or 4 on the grade 4 ELA, rather than levels 2, 3, or 4.

The district needs to disaggregate its data to identify areas where students are consistently doing poorly or to identify subsets of students who are doing poorly. In the template section, there are several charts that the district may want to use to guide their data disaggregation. Districts should remember that item analysis of tests might be an appropriate way to disaggregate data. In really small districts, disaggregation of some or all data may have less significance.

Districts need to look not only at **quantifiable** data, but also **qualitative** data. Some examples of qualitative data are students' attitudes about school, parents concerns about safety, community allegiance to sports teams. Student self-assessment is an important data source that districts frequently ignore. Often students know better why they consistently do not do well in certain areas of a subject or why they consistently cut certain classes.

The district needs to identify relevant state and local key indicators or benchmarks that it wants its students to achieve. Then the district can measure its achievement against the benchmarks and identify areas where there are gaps between what students achieve and what the district sets as its desired target.

c) How should the district question its data?

Not only do many school districts lack experience disaggregating data, they also are not used to questioning data. Districts often rush to judgement and adopt a solution that does not address the real problem. Districts may identify programs that they would like to use for successful interventions but are not able to identify data that would indicate that the program really would help students learn. An exchange on the CDEP listserv earlier this year highlighted the need to ask many questions in order to find the appropriate solution(s).

d) An example of questioning data. *

Districts must be prepared to ask hypothetical question about data in order to investigate a specific educational question. The specific issue is how can the district improve the passing rate of students on Sequential I Mathematics. This is basically a question of curriculum and instructional design: What more should the district do to help students pass? Initial questions would be: Is the course content aligned with the state standards and with the test? Does the district need to identify students who need more time on task? How will the district provide more time on task?

If more time on task for Sequential I is needed, several more questions come to mind. Who are the students who should be taking Sequential I over two years? Who are the students who should be taking Sequential I over one year, but with a three time per six day cycle laboratory class? How does the district use data to determine the difference?

The district then needs to think about how it collects data. For example: Has the district collected data by interviewing students who failed both the class and the Regents exam? Does attendance data suggest that possibly one root cause of not passing is not attending class? Why did the students not attend? Is there a problem with preparation in earlier grades? Is there a problem with perception of the relevance of studying Sequential I? How should the district develop strategies that focus more on motivating students than on punitive measures to address poor attendance?

The planning team may also need to consider questions related to instructional design when developing strategies to improve student performance. What should the district do differently in the two-year course than in the one-year course? How should the laboratory class be structured? Should all the classes be in the computer room? Should the district involve the art teacher with applications of geometry to art? Should the physical education teacher apply statistics to sports? Should the business teacher apply equations to spreadsheet design? Should the district involve the guidance counselors and social workers in an attendance program?

There are also questions around professional development. Has the planning team collected data about the preparation of the mathematics teachers? Has the planning team interviewed the mathematics teachers about their perceptions of why students do poorly? Does the district need workshops on teaching mathematics? Should the math teachers have a workshop conducted by a specialist in special education? Should the district have a workshop on aligning classroom assessment with State assessment?

The district must also decide how it will use data for a summative evaluation of its progress in enabling students to pass Sequential I. How does the district go beyond data about implementation of the strategy to evaluating its affect on students? Has the percentage of students attending class increased? Does the district need to track student progress through a portfolio of skills actually learned?

*Most of the questions listed were developed by Dr. Elaine Zseller of the Nassau BOCES research staff in a posting to the CDEP listserv on May 9, 2000.

3. Identify successes in relation to key indicators

Each district should look at the indicators it identified to see where the district is doing a good job. The districts that have participated in the comprehensive planning pilots have reported that it was very important to look at the district's strengths and successful interventions. In addition to the standards and benchmarks that are being met, districts should focus on programs and processes that are improving student achievement. The district should list these successes and supply data to document their success. For example, if all students in one or two schools achieved level 3 or 4 on the new fourth grade ELA exam, the district should provide that data and then examine why this school is so successful in early English Language Arts instruction. By so doing, the district would identify what works and might be able to apply the same principles to areas where instruction is less successful.

4. Prioritize gaps

The planning committee needs to spend time determining which gaps it should address first. The gaps it identifies are the "areas for improvement" that the district believes to be most important.

5. Provide a rationale for prioritization of gap

The district needs to develop a written statement of why the specific gaps were chosen. Everyone who reads the plan and who is in the district should understand why the specific gaps were identified. Otherwise, there will not be universal commitment to addressing the gaps.

6. Identify data that were used

Each district should provide a complete list of all the data it used. Districts are encouraged to keep the list current throughout the planning process. The purpose of the data list is to inform plan readers of the scope and thoroughness of the data analysis. Readers are likely to be able to suggest additional data that the planning team may want to consider as it updates the district plan.

7. Explain how data were used

Plan evaluators have had difficulty determining how districts used data and whether they did an adequate job. By providing an explanation, districts will focus their own efforts to use data, clarifying its use for the district, and thereby increase the effectiveness of the planning process.

The district will need to assemble items 1-6 and provide them on the templates. They will help the district planning committee and everyone who will implement, monitor, or simply read the plan to understand what the planning committee has done.

C. What the District Will Include in the Written Plan.

1. Prioritized district gaps and rationale for prioritization
2. District successes
3. Data that were used
4. Explanation of how data were used

STEP 3: Root Cause Analysis

A. What the District Will do

1. Conduct root cause analysis for gaps and successes
2. Identify primary root causes to be addressed

B. Guidance for Items Above

1. Conduct root cause analysis for gaps and successes

Identifying root causes is critical to successful planning. The district must look beyond the obvious to assess the underlying causes. Too many districts report “hunches” rather than root causes that are clearly the real reasons for the area needing improvement. Attachment 2 contains “A Primer on Root Cause” that was developed by Dr. Paul Preuss. The primer emphasizes the need to delve into root cause. It is important to reflect on the entire system and understand how change in one part may affect other parts. Finding the “root causes” is perhaps the most difficult part of the planning process. Too often, people make quick, uninformed decisions about what the underlying cause is. If symptoms rather than root causes are selected for action, the district will fail to raise student achievement. One of the reasons for gathering and analyzing so much data is to help the district to find root causes.

Perhaps a simple example of a hunch would be instructive. “Students are not doing well on the English Regents because they skip class. Therefore, we need more counselors.” This example has two hunches:

1. That students are not doing well on the English Regents because they skip class. What data support this? Have they skipped class for several years or just this year? Why are they skipping class?
2. That hiring counselors will keep students from skipping class. What evidence does the district have to show that counselors get students to attend classes?

As the root cause Primer points out, the district should go through the “five whys” when identifying root cause. The district should set out its hunches about what the root causes are, then look at the data to see if the hunches are correct. The district may find several root causes over which it has no control. Examples would be poverty, no English spoken in the home, insufficient tax base, etc. The district obviously cannot remediate root causes like this. Rather it should see if there are additional or different root causes affecting that goal that are within its control.

The district needs to provide disaggregated data to support its root causes. It may even want to provide the five “whys” that it identified in finding each root causes. Those who invest their energies in implementing the plan need to be reassured that the most critical needs are being address. In addition, each district should provide a paragraph or two that describes the process it used to identify root causes. The paragraph may include a description of how the district plans to refine its root causes or to get additional training in identifying root cause if it does not believe that its first year effort is sufficient. Through the process of identifying root causes, the district will arrive at a list of root causes that must be addressed in order to focus on improving student achievemem

C. What the District Will Include in the Written Plan

1. The root causes for the gaps that are identified and the data supporting these root causes.

STEP 4: Develop Implementation Plan 13

A. What the District Will Do

1. Specify desired change in student performance
2. Identify strategies for each gap
3. List major tasks/activities
4. Identify the target population
5. Determine dates for implementing each task/activity
6. Identify funding sources
7. Assign responsibility

B. Guidance for Items Above

1. Specify desired change in student performance.

The district should look at its prioritized gaps and their identified root causes to set its goals. For example, if one of the prioritized gaps is to improve student achievement on the 4th grade ELA exam, the district may want to say that the desired changes is to move from 30% of students scoring at level 1 to 10% at that level next year. The district should set measurable goals so that it can monitor the effectiveness of the strategies it develops.

The action plan for each need identified is a working document that describes, clearly and briefly, the program of work to be undertaken on that particular need. The district should identify effective intervention strategies and other action steps which are defined as operational steps or actions required to make the need a reality. They should be **SMART**:

- Specific (target a specific area for improvement)
- Measurable – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress
- Assignable – specify who will do it
- Realistic – state what results can realistically be achieved given available resources
- Time related – especially when the results can be achieved.

2. Identify strategies for each gap

For each gap, the district should identify the strategies it will use to dissolve the root cause so it can meet its goal. What successful processes and programs would help improve student achievement? What research shows that the interventions the district has chosen will work?

3. List major tasks/activities

The district should identify each task or activity to be undertaken to achieve this strategy for improving student achievement. This column is where the district needs to think about the use of non-fiscal resources such as professional development; technology; BOCES, Teacher

Centers, Effective Schools, RIC, SETRC, and other support services; business, cultural and other community resources; parents, etc. The district may want to include successful strategies from Section III of its plan. The district may also want to consider using validated programs/research-based models as ways to address their needs and strategies.

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4. Identify target population

Identify the students and/or building(s) expected to benefit from the achievement of each strategy.

5. Determine dates for implementing each task/activity

The district needs to allow a reasonable amount of time to implement each task/activity, but it is very important to establish a timeframe. Otherwise, it will not be able to monitor its progress and hold designated individuals accountable for making sure that the district does actually undertake its major tasks/activities.

6. Identify funding sources

The district needs to allocate the fiscal resources it will use to achieve each strategy. The district should report each funding source – tax levy, other local, State, federal (by source – Title I, bilingual, etc), foundation or other private source. The district should assign actual dollar amounts so that those who are responsible know what resources they have. It is very important that the district align its resources to address its greatest needs.

7. Assign responsibility

Finally, the district must assign responsibility for undertaking the activities or tasks to complete the strategies. Individuals should be clearly designated by name and title. This is important because it makes someone accountable for implementing the strategy. It is not sufficient to say “teachers” or “parents.”

C. What the District Will Include in the Written Plan

1. Gaps/root causes
2. Strategies
3. Major tasks/activities
4. Target population
5. Dates
6. Funding sources
7. Who is responsible

STEP 5: Evaluating and Reporting Results

A. What the District Will Do

1. Monitor implementation plan
2. Develop performance indicators
3. Use data to revise strategies
4. Disseminate evaluation results

B. Guidance for Items Above

1. Monitor implementation plan

Comprehensive planning is a continuous, long-term process. In order to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the comprehensive district education plan's strategies, the district needs to develop an evaluation process and related activities that are coordinated, systematic, and communicated to all stakeholders. Because increasing student achievement is a long-term activity, the evaluation must be based on a cycle of continuous improvement. In a district that is continuously improving, the stakeholders need to understand the impact each element has on the other parts. In conjunction with evaluation data, the district then determines what to improve and makes improvements on an ongoing basis. Is addressing the root causes changing student achievement?

2. Develop performance indicators

The district needs to develop performance indicators for each strategy that measure the strategy's effectiveness or relationship to improving student achievement. The district should tie each indicator to the appropriate strategy and explain how the indicator will be monitored. The performance indicators should enable the district to determine when it has remediated the identified gaps. **The district should limit the number of performance indicators it identifies to the handful needed to inform practitioners whether or not the strategy is having the desired impact on the targeted student achievement issue.** The district will have to collect data that supports its performance on the indicator. Therefore, the district must have the capacity to collect and analyze the data that it identifies. By developing performance indicators the district is developing feedback loops that cause the district to reexamine its plan and the progress its students are making. The district must report how it developed and how it will use its performance indicators.

3. Use data to revise strategies

Each district needs to determine how it will systematically use data and other evaluation results to revise its strategies, if necessary, or to develop additional strategies. The district must report the process it will use to do this.

4. Disseminate results

The district needs to develop a plan on how it will periodically inform the public about how effective its comprehensive plan is in improving student achievement. The district should coordinate this report with its School Report Card. The district must set out its plan to inform the public.

5. CDEP evaluation

The district needs to formally evaluate how well it did in addressing its identified priority needs at least annually. By carefully evaluating the progress it has made, the district will be able to decide if it has made sufficient progress to identify new priorities for its comprehensive plan. Comprehensive planning is a continuous, cyclical process of setting priorities, working on them, assessing progress, and updating priorities and the comprehensive plan.

C. What the District Will Include in the Written Plan

1. Its performance indicators
2. How it will use data to revise strategies
3. How it will evaluate its progress
4. How and how frequently it will disseminate evaluation results

Words of Wisdom from the pilot districts: Your plan will never be perfect, it is a developmental tool. The next iteration will be better. The more you share it at all stages and seek comment, the stronger the plan will be.

Submission Guidelines

The district should submit three copies of its CDEP by July 31, 2001 to:

Office of Innovative Programs
Room 464 Education Building Addition
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

The district must submit the assurance page and a copy of the Board of Education resolution approving the plan.

Attachments:

1. CDEP Template
2. A Primer on Root Cause and other guidance

