

# Technical Assistance Worksheets for Writing School Reform Plans

*For Priority and Focus Schools*

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October 2014 Edition



# Acknowledgements

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## School Reform Planning Worksheet #1: The Flex Model Intervention Strategy from 30,000 ft.

**Directions:** As a team, come to an agreement on the following questions for the selected intervention. Try to summarize what this intervention will look like and what it means for your students in just a couple of sentences. Note that this is a simple worksheet, but it may require a lot of prior discussion.

**INTERVENTION:**

What does this intervention mean at your school?

What do you hope to accomplish?



## Why write a Theory of Action?

When we think about the changes that are necessary in schools, we often focus solely on the outcomes we would like to produce (Better test scores! Higher graduation rates! More engaged students!), or on selecting programs or solutions that we believe will produce those results, without fully considering HOW those interventions will actually make the change happen. This can be problematic. Sometimes the selected school reform strategy does not have the impact we expected. Is it because it was not the right match for our problem? Because it had additional unintended consequences? Because we never fully implemented it? If there is a weak link in the intervention, then where is it and what can we do about it? Thinking through a theory of action allows us to more clearly see the chain of changes that will have to happen for the intervention to be successful. This can help us in the planning stage to be sure that the solutions we are choosing truly align with the impact we'd like to see. Later on, it allows us to better identify what about a given intervention is not working so that we can adjust.

## School Reform Planning Worksheet #2: Theory of Action

**Directions:** Use the following sentence stem to create a Theory of Action for your intervention. An example is provided.

### SENTENCE STEM

**IF** we implement Intervention (Flex Menu #), including the following specific components (program elements) **THEN** (circle all that apply) teachers/administrators/parents will (educator/parent practices) and **students will** (student behaviors and outcomes).

### EXAMPLE

**IF** we implement Intervention *C-III.3*, including the following specific components *restorative justice practices and a new afterschool mentoring program for students with frequent discipline actions and absences* **THEN** teachers and administrators will *enhance their relationships with students and use more effective conflict resolution techniques*, and students will *feel more positively about their school experience and will spend more time engaged in instruction*.

### YOUR TURN

**IF** we implement Intervention \_\_\_\_\_,

including the following specific components

**THEN** (circle all that apply) **teachers/administrators/parents**

**will**

and **students will**

## *Will my school be held accountable by RIDE for meeting the goals we set here?*

No. The RI accountability system relies on school report cards and the exit criteria listed below. The purpose of these goals is to focus your work and allow the school team, district, and state leadership to check in on and discuss the progress of school transformation. Schools cannot exit Priority or Focus status on the basis of meeting these goals, nor can they experience further state intervention on the basis of falling short of them.

## *What are the exit criteria?*

- Meet 80% of AMOs (standardized test targets set according to federal regulation) over three consecutive years (Priority schools) or two consecutive years (Focus schools)

**OR**

- Achieve a CIS score of 50 or higher for three consecutive years (Priority schools) or two consecutive years (Focus schools)

## School Reform Planning Worksheet #3: Choosing Three Year Goals

**Directions:** Select up to 5 indicators from Section One of the School Reform Plan template that tie as directly as possible to your intervention strategy. For each indicator, write a goal statement that includes a target for each of the next three years. An example is provided, as well as questions to consider as you make your selection.

### EXAMPLE

Leading indicator: The Student Growth Percentile on the STAR Math Assessment will increase by 5 each year.

Lagging indicators: The CIS scores for proficiency and gap closure will increase each year. Each year, the percent of students proficient in Math will increase, and the gap between the overall percent proficient and the SES subgroup percent proficient in Math will decrease.

### CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS *IN ORDER*

For the questions below, be as specific as possible. While the expectation is that all outcomes for all students will start to improve as the school implements a comprehensive set of changes, in selecting these metrics you should make as clear a link as you can between the actions you will be taking and how they will contribute to the school's rapid improvement. This will make the targets more useful as you assess the effectiveness of your intervention strategies.

**1. Which indicators on Section One must improve if our school is to meet exit criteria?** These are probably "lagging indicators," high stakes measures that represent your ultimate aim and may take a while to impact.

**2. Which indicators on Section One do we expect to show improvement if our intervention strategy is successful?**

These may be lagging indicators as well, or they may be "leading indicators" that can be more quickly affected and may be specific to your district or building.

3. **How do our answers to #1 and #2 above overlap or connect to each other?** If you find some overlap, focus your goals on those powerful indicators. If you find no overlap and the connections are a stretch, consider whether your intervention strategy is truly aligned to your school's needs.

4. **How ambitious should our targets be?** If you meet the benchmarks you set, will that be a strong indication that the school is setting itself on the path to meeting exit criteria? What would you consider to be success for the intervention strategy you are planning?

5. **When should we see results?** Should you see any progress in the first year if your intervention is working? Steady progress over several years?

Now, write your goal statement:

**3 YEAR GOALS (MUST REFER TO ONE OR MORE LEADING OR LAGGING INDICATORS TRACKED ON SECTION 1)**

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## School Reform Planning Worksheet #4: Identifying Tasks and Processes

**Directions:** Brainstorm everything that needs to happen for this Intervention Strategy to be successful between now and June 2016. Think about CONTENT, PERSONNEL AND STUDENT SUPPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP.

Now, you will sort this list 3 times.

**Sort # 1:** Sort your list into *tasks* and *processes*.

*Note:* Save your list of tasks! This should become part of a school work plan for implementing the intervention. From this point forward, however, the focus of quarterly discussions between RIDE, the district, and the school team regarding the school's progress implementing the School Reform Plan will be focused on the processes.

**Sort # 2:** Sort your *processes* into those that relate shifting or expanding EDUCATOR/PARENT PRACTICE and those that are the STUDENT OUTCOMES you hope to see as a result.

**Sort #3:** Select the 2-4 *processes* that are most important to successfully implementing your school reform intervention. What is worth your school team's time to collect data on and review quarterly? Make sure that at least one relates to EDUCATOR/PARENT PRACTICE and at least one to STUDENT OUTCOMES.

## *What is the difference between a task and a process?*

A **TASK** is a *one-time* action that can be assessed simply by evaluating whether it has been accomplished or not (or to some degree). Some examples are hiring a Literacy Coach, or revising the school attendance policy. While these may be essential for the intervention strategy and may take some time, there is no need to review data as a team to determine whether they are being done well.

In contrast, a **PROCESS** is an action that is *ongoing* and requires multiple evidence points beyond whether it was accomplished to assess its effectiveness. Usually, a process involves making a long term change to something about the way people think, communicate, or act. For example, using the attendance example above, a process might be "provide parents with information such that they understand and buy into the new policies and their consequences." While we could say "yes or no" to whether parents received information on the new policy; including a need for understanding and buy-in shifts this work to a process. Now assessing the quality of the implementation will involve looking at parent feedback not only on whether they received the new policy, but also whether they understand it, whether they agree with it, and whether they follow through on it.

## School Reform Planning Worksheet #5: Choosing indicators of progress for adults and students

**Directions:** Write your most important processes in the table below. Remember to include at least one that relates to shifting educator/parent practice and at least one that describes the change you want to see in student outcomes.

For each process, list questions you will want to investigate and return to often to determine whether your school reform intervention is resulting in the changes necessary to achieve the goals you set for yourself.

Finally, for each set of questions, list some measurement tools you either have or will develop that will help you answer these questions each quarter. This is your plan! As you begin implementing, you will submit reports on your implementation progress using data from the measurement tools you choose here.

For your reference, examples of possible processes to monitor and related measurement tools are provided on the next page.

<b>Process</b> <i>At least 2, no more than 4.</i>	<b>Educator/ Parent Practice or Student Outcome?</b> <i>At least one of each.</i>	<b>Questions the school will consider to determine effectiveness of implementation</b>	<b>Measurement Tools</b> <i>School-selected &amp; reported; available at least twice per school year.</i>

## Sample Indicators of Shifts in Educator/Parent Practice

### Behaviors to Monitor:

- Enhanced teachers instructional proficiency as it pertains to the content being focused on in the intervention
  - *Examples of potential measurement tools:* instruction walk-throughs, instructional rounds, informal observations, peer review, etc.
- Teachers' implementation of professional supports provided as a result of the intervention
  - *Examples of potential measurement tools:* teacher exit surveys from PD sessions regarding transfer to classroom, observations of group meetings that evaluate whether teachers are planning specific interventions as a result, degree of transfer of practice to classroom, etc.
- Teachers' effectively working together in teams to discuss student data and plan interventions:
  - *Examples of potential measurement tools:* Surveys about teachers' views on this process, Rubric to evaluate of meeting protocols and behaviors, Assessment of how much team members have grown in the specific intervention the group is implementing
- Increased trust between teachers and administration:
  - *Examples of potential measurement tools:* Surveys of teachers and parents regarding school climate and culture (including mission and vision).

## Sample Indicators of Student Outcomes

### Outcomes to Monitor:

- Student achievement in the content area being specifically addressed by the intervention.
  - *Examples of potential indicators:* Teacher-made assessments, standardized assessments DIBELS, VMATH, etc., Student portfolios, etc.
- Students are more able to access and succeed with high quality and challenging curriculum.
  - *Examples of potential indicators:* Monitoring disaggregated patterns of student enrollment in higher level courses, Student pass rates by group, Student perceptions of academic climate including but not limited to questions on:
    - Teacher expectations
    - The degree to which they find their courses challenging and of high quality.
- Students' behavior and positive feelings about school culture is increased.
  - *Examples of potential indicators:* Rate of referrals by group, Parent/student surveys regarding school climate and relationship with teachers, Student tardiness rate.