Module 2: Part 2 - Setting Priorities

The Prioritizing Needs Protocol to follow is designed to support Comprehensive School Improvement Teams (CSIT) at each school classified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) to identify and focus the CSIT on the needs deemed to be the most pressing for school improvement efforts.

This protocol is the second step in a three step process which will ultimately result in the CSIT identifying 3-5 high-importance needs and their likely root causes.

Facilitator Notes:

This protocol is meant to follow the Identifying Needs Protocol. Each participant should have identified high priority data points or observations after reviewing the school's Report Card, found at https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov.

Calibration of *Performance* and *Importance*

Time: 30 minutes

To be able to use the Prioritizing Needs Protocol, the team will be required to revisit their observations and/or data and evaluate it along two dimensions:

1. Performance: How well is the school doing?
2. Importance: What is the extent to which the data has a large or small impact?

Understanding Performance: It is important to develop a shared definition around performance in your school community. As stated in the Education Accountability Act of 2019, schools in which more than 20 percent of students do not meet expectations on a state assessment should include a SMART+E goal in that content area to increase the percent of students proficient. For CSI schools, one area of focus should be the reason for which the school was identified.

> Questions to Ask:
>
> - How well are we doing?
> - How would we know?
> - What factors contribute to our overall school star rating?
>
> Possible Participant Responses:
>
> - Performance as compared to state average
> - Performance as compared to similar schools
> - The performance level required to meet or exceed expectations on state assessments

Facilitator(s) should capture responses and work to build consensus around what reflects strong/positive and weak/negative performance for their school community.

Understanding Importance: As with performance, it is important to develop a shared definition around importance in your school community. You are trying to make visible the various perspectives and

priorities brought by different stakeholders. It is often helpful to refer to your mission and vision statements as guides for prioritization.

Questions to Ask:

- What is important to our school community?
- What has the most impact on the greatest number of stakeholders?
- What is important to you for our school community?

Possible Participant Responses:

- Equity
- Student Engagement
- Student Well-being
- Increase achievement on state assessment for ALL students

Facilitator(s) should capture responses and work to build consensus around school priorities.

With a shared understanding of what *Performance and Importance* mean to your school community, you are now ready to start prioritizing your school's needs.
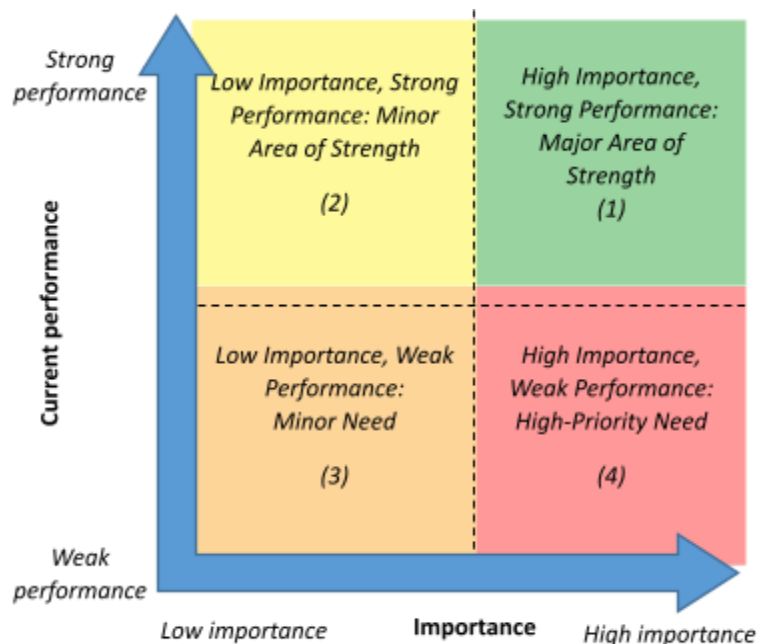
Prioritization

Time: 60 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Sticky notes

Chart paper with the following quadrants drawn (see Module 2 for more details on this graph)

Process:

1. Discuss the chart paper graph you've created, explaining the two axes and four quadrants (see above performance/importance).

2. Reflect the shared value statements around performance and importance you developed in the calibration process.

3. The objective is to narrow the range of needs to those in the bottom right quadrant, and of those, the most urgent 3-5.

4. Once participants have an understanding of the chart paper graph, ask them to look at their data points or observations and select the top three data points that stand out to them. These can be positive or negative data points, or they can be data points the participants just think merit discussion. Invite team members to place their data points where they feel they belong on the chart. Encourage team members to look at other data/observations and group similar data/observations within the same quadrant together.

5. After all participants have placed their sticky notes, read each data/observation aloud and try one final consolidation of similar or substantially related sticky notes. **Focus only on the bottom right quadrant.** If you have between 3-5 clusters of sticky notes, those are your highest priority needs. If, as is likely the case, you have more, you will need to facilitate a final conversation around identifying the top 5. Participants should be given a chance to advocate for their sticky notes and judgements. You can vote to narrow the needs to five.

6. Facilitator Tip: Keep referring the participants to what the team deemed as your school's importance and performance indicators.

7. Record the final 3-5 identified high priority needs for future reference and next steps (Root Cause Analysis)

8. Allow participants to reflect on the experience of their process.

Module 2 Appendix ii: Prioritizing Needs Note Taking Sheet

Calibration Notes:

After the CSIT has had its conversations about importance and performance, what did you agree with the whole group on? Were there areas where you disagreed?

Prioritization:

What were the three to five highest importance needs you individually identified? Record them below and locate them on your personal graph:
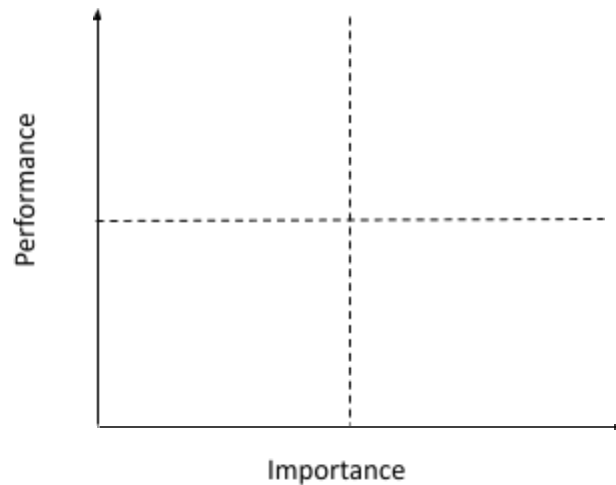
Once the group builds consensus, what are the entire CSIT's 3-5 identified highest importance needs? Record them below: