Overview of Identifying Gaps Process

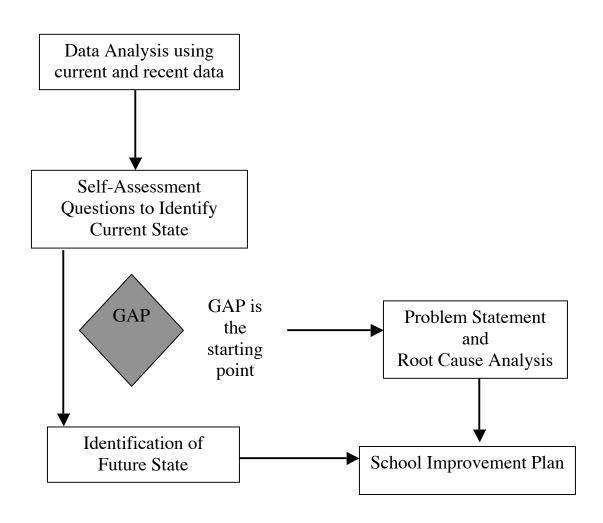
The process that involves the identification of gaps between the current state and the future or desired state is the beginning point for implementation of a school improvement process. When the process of identifying gaps includes a deep analysis of the factors that have created the current state, the groundwork has been laid for improvement planning. The gap analysis process can be used to ensure that the improvement process does not jump from identification of problem areas to proposed solutions without understanding the conditions that created the current state. The following guidelines are suggested for use by principals and team leaders who are charged with developing campus improvement plans:

- 1) Lay the groundwork for this process by explaining that identifying gaps does not mean that individuals are at fault. Rather it is a means of examining systemic factors that contributed to the current state.
- 2) Using the scale to determine the current state is most successful if the group doing this work is assured that they can be honest in their assessments without fear of retribution. One way to reinforce this is to have participants write their ratings on stickies that are collected and posted on a flip with a scale drawn on it. This will support anonymity. The evidence that is given to support ratings is usually delivered verbally, but it could be written and collected in an anonymous process if the leader knows that individuals have concerns.
- 3) The information gathered in this process needs to be written up and reviewed by the team that is working on the improvement plan. If questions arise from this review process, the team could outline a means of investigating the issue to verify it.
- 4) The intent of this process is to gather information that will be used to develop a future or desired state based on the indicators that are on the gap analysis worksheet. The team may decide to write additional indicators or to revise existing indicators if it decides that the need exists.
- 5) As a result of identifying the gaps between the current state and the future state, planning teams can develop a problem statement that summarizes the underlying structural issue that needs to be addressed. A root cause analysis can then be developed in order to determine the factors that are crucial to improvement.
- 6) The factors that are identified are then used in the development of goals and objectives for the improvement plan.

Austin, Texas



Analysis of the Current State



Instructions for Gap Analysis Questions

- 1) Read the questions carefully and review indicators for each question. Circle aspects of the indicator that you perceive as present and underline those that you think are lacking.
- 2) Use the scale at the bottom of the page to determine the percentage of effectiveness your school is achieving in this practice. Record the scores on a piece of paper or post-it notes. All participants' ratings will be recorded on a larger chart as part of a group process.
- 3) After effectiveness percentages have been recorded, identify the evidence that supports your perception of effectiveness. This evidence will be shared with the larger group.

Gap Analysis (Template)

Question:

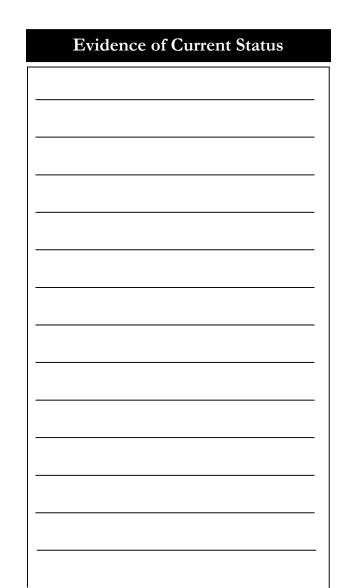
Indicators of 100%	Evidence of Current Status
a)	
b)	
c)	

0 - 20%	21-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Little or no evidence of indicators.	Activities for some indicators are being implemented.	Activities for most indicators are being implemented.	Activities for virtually all indicators are being implemented.

1. How well does the school maintain high expectations of students and ensure that all students are provided a quality education?

Indicators of 100%

- a) Expectations exceed state standards and are clearly defined and frequently communicated to students, families, and staff.
- b) All students, including those receiving special education and English as a Second Language services, are incorporated into mainstream classrooms and provided with the support needed to be successful.
- c) Enrollment in advanced-level classes such as Algebra I and gifted and talent programs reflects the student populations in the school and district.
- d) A "no-failure" policy exists that ensures that struggling students are identified early and receive support targeted to identified needs.
- e) Rewarding students and teachers for their commitment to high expectations and their hard work is embedded in daily practice.

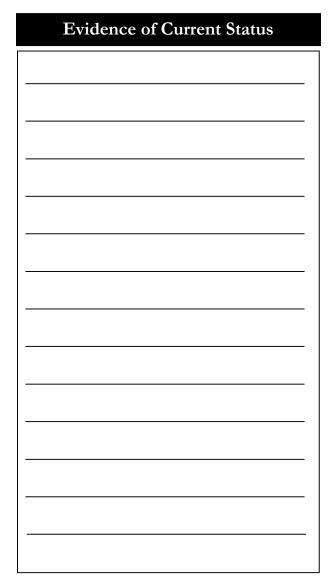


0 - 20%	21-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Little or no evidence of indicators.	Activities for some indicators are being implemented.	Activities for most indicators are being implemented.	Activities for virtually all indicators are being implemented.

2. How well does the school provide training and support to ensure that all staff members are collaborative partners in instructional decision making and can effectively implement instructional improvement?

Indicators of 100%

- f) Staff are trained in how to use data to identify areas of weakness for school improvement initiatives.
- g) Staff are trained in methods of using disaggregated data to target student needs and to determine instructional effectiveness.
- h) Staff are trained on models that incorporate strategies that increase the amount and intensity of time students have with a smaller group of teachers.
- Professional development is in-depth and ongoing, addresses specifically defined student learning goals, and provides alternative forms of professional development, including ways to share professional knowledge with colleagues.
- Staff have input on decisions that most affect their work, such as professional growth, curricular and instructional choices and school organization, and have adequate time to discuss these issues and make collaborative decisions.



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3. How well does the curriculum guide the school staff in ensuring that all students are successful learners?

Indicators of 100%

- k) Curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned with state standards and teachers know what is to be taught and learned at each grade level and subject area.
- All students, including those receiving special education and English as a Second Language services, receive instruction based on the same content received by other students.
- m) Data is used to determine effectiveness of existing curriculum and student learning reflects mastery of the appropriate grade level and content area subject matter
- n) Classroom instruction focuses on subject area content with minimal distractions.
- o) Space, time and money are allotted to effectively support schoolwide learning and teachers are compensated (though stipends, substitutes, etc.) for the time they spend in additional activities such as curriculum alignment, professional development, and student tutoring.

Evidence of Current Status

0 - 20%	21-50%	51-75%	76-100%
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4. How well does the school ensure that all students receive individualized attention and support for learning?

Indicators of 100%

- p) Staff are educated about the unique developmental needs of middle-grade students and ways to meet these needs.
- q) Students are provided with opportunities to build relationships with adults through small groupings and mentoring programs.
- r) Students know how to access programs that provide in-school academic support, such as individual tutoring and homework assistance centers.
- s) Students are active participants in structured and ongoing opportunities for meaningful after-school activities, such as project-based learning, academic clubs, and non-academic activities, with adults.
- t) The school partners with community organizations and universities to increase the number of volunteer services that address individual student needs.

Evidence of Current Status			
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