

School Performance

**HOW TO MEET AYP
AND ACHIEVE
LONG-TERM
SUCCESS**



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International Center for Leadership in Education

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Many items in the Appendix are also on the electronic media.

How to Use this Resource Kit

The *No Child Left Behind* federal legislation, with its adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements, has created a new sense of urgency for the need to assist local schools with proven technical assistance related to improved student achievement. Many schools face potential sanctions if the performance of students in the various subgroups does not improve.

Each state has identified those schools where students in one or more subgroups are not making adequate yearly progress. Other schools are “on the bubble” and could easily become labeled as in need of improvement. Even schools that are doing well can find themselves struggling to meet the needs of new groups of English language learners or students with other identified needs.

To be blunt, the performance accountability equation in public education has changed dramatically in the last few years. Furthermore, many educators and policymakers are coming to grips with a key fact — many current professional development programs are lacking in the ability to transform schools and districts significantly to meet the requirements of AYP and NCLB.

School Performance — How to Meet AYP and Achieve Long-term Success is designed to address the leadership needs associated with improving the performance of students in all schools. Improvement is continuous — schools must get better year after year to make AYP. This kit offers a comprehensive systems approach to the transformation of schools, districts, and even state education systems. It is based on cutting-edge research, practical efforts that work, and a frank and honest approach to the issues facing education. Resources are provided for creating awareness and conducting professional development, including video presentations and PowerPoint slides.

Chapter 1 - The Challenge Facing All Schools describes why NCLB came into existence and the requirements it places on students and educators to meet changing societal needs. The chapter provides an overview of the important factors facing schools today and why the need for improvement is so critical throughout the nation.

Chapter 2 - Creating a Culture for Success provides the context for improvement through changing the culture using vision/mission. The need for culture change is explained as well, because it is critical for all who participate in the activities suggested in this resource kit to have a firm understanding of why change is so important. The value of a strong mission/vision is presented along with tips and strategies to help organizations create a mission/vision that is accepted by everyone associated with the organization.

Chapter 3 - Leadership discusses the importance of leadership to organizational success, especially distributed leadership, or leadership at all levels of the school, district, and state. Why change is needed in the way leadership is viewed and implemented is also discussed.

Chapter 4 - Profound Knowledge moves from the *why* of change to both the *what* and the *how* of application. From leadership to classroom strategies to community involvement, this chapter focuses on doing the right things to improve performance in an effective manner. The concepts of systems thinking, alignment, and various theories of profound knowledge are presented.

Chapter 5 – Data-driven Achievement moves into a detailed discussion of the importance of data to drive decision making in all aspects of education. The concept of *breakthrough performance* is

Chapter 1 The Challenge Facing All Schools

Goals of this Resource Kit

The discussion about why changes are needed in education and the concept of systems thinking are important predecessors to the goals of this resource kit, which are as follows:

- To provide systems frameworks/models that schools and districts can implement to improve student achievement and performance.
- To empower communities to work together to improve education.
- To provide professional development information so that adults acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to transform their system of education.
- To create a common language regarding state, district, and school improvement.
- To assist educators in removing barriers to systems transformation at all levels of education organizations.

Criticism is a natural reaction to the system of education that needs transformation.

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Achievement of these goals is designed to lead to:

1. Improved educator performance on a continuous basis.
2. Improved student performance on a continuous basis.

How can educators transform their current organization into one that is higher performing? And how can educators maintain and improve on high levels of performance? The answers to these questions are outlined in subsequent chapters.

How can educators transform their current organization into one that is higher performing?

It is critical to understand the set of overarching relationships that must be acknowledged and then addressed if success is to be achieved. To put it another way, new knowledge and skills are one thing, but what is important upfront is an awareness *and* a willingness to confront the components of relationships that the current education system does not always acknowledge. These components are described below.

Key Components of a New Relationship

Current Structure of Education

One thing is clear: the structure of our education organizations has not changed significantly in many years. There have been numerous new programs, curricula, technological advances, etc., but this is not structure. Instead, we are talking about:

- The physical components of how schools are organized, class size issues, and funding for materials, supplies, and curriculum.
- Mission and vision statements that are written but are rarely the driving force behind the decisions made on a daily basis.
- Leaders who are rewarded for management instead of leadership.

-
- Lack of professional development and training to cope with changes required in education.
 - Constant passage of new state and federal laws that are often in conflict with one another.
 - A lack of alignment throughout the system of education at all levels.

The list of structural issues could go on and on, and many of these issues have been around for decades, if not an entire century. Tackling structural issues in the system of education is absolutely critical for the transformation that must occur.

Tackling structural issues in the system of education is absolutely critical for the transformation that must occur.

Tamini and Sebastianelli.
“The Barriers to Total Quality Management”

Barriers to Effectiveness and Efficiency

According to Tamini and Sebastianelli’s research, common factors inhibiting education reform across the country include the following:

In order to expect people to do things differently, they must received support and be involved in the ultimate decisions that impact what they do on a daily basis.

- Best practices not benchmarked.
- Employees don’t receive enough training and skill development.
- Employees are not trained in problem-solving techniques.
- Employees are change resistant.
- Employees are not trained in group decision-making.
- Lack of adequate resources.
- Employees are not recognized for achievements in quality.
- Time constraints.
- Employees are not empowered to implement improvement efforts.

More than half of the barriers to change relate to employee issues.

This list of potential barriers to reform is not surprising. In fact, just about every one of them is a no-brainer. The fact that more than half of the barriers relate to employee issues drives home the point that the key to change is

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employee-related. In order to expect people to do things differently, they must receive support and be involved in the ultimate decisions that impact what they do on a daily basis.

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The common theme found throughout this resource kit is that of change. But not just change for the sake of change (firing inward), but rather changing organizations to reach new levels of performance and success. Most of us know we need to change but are fearful as to how to do this. We have been burned many times by new programs and strategies, and we are tired of it. Add to this is the criticism we must endure because existing performance levels are too low.

In short, to talk about change is almost the last straw for many of us. Yet, change we must — and a guiding direction from a mission or vision will help us accept and support the change that is inevitable for everyone in our field.

Highest Hopes, Worst Fears

The following exercise can help an organization deal with the twin factors of fear and change. Completing this exercise may prove beneficial in working on the mission/vision. The exercise is simple. Answer two questions:

- As a member of your organization (school, district, etc.), what are your **highest hopes** for your students, colleagues, yourself, and the organization as a whole?
- As a member of your organization (school, district, etc.), what are your **worst fears** for your students, colleagues, yourself, and the organization as a whole?

The Appendix has a template with these questions on it plus a sample of responses that were collected after completing this exercise with a group of educators representing every level of a school system. Similar responses have come from educators in other settings around the country.

As a member of your organization, what are your highest hopes and worst fears?

The template is also on the CD-ROM.

Finally, once this exercise is completed and the list of hopes and fears is shared publicly, it will be important to consider these findings as you work on building high expectations for your organization through your mission/vision.

So What Does This All Mean?

To sum up the key points about mission/vision, consider once again the following:

Long-term improvement is not possible without a mission or vision that guides organizational change and improvement. Mission is the absolute first step.

We all have beliefs and expectations about our students, colleagues, and work environment.

- Long-term improvement is not possible without a mission or vision that guides organizational change and improvement. Mission is the absolute first step.
- People can and will buy into a meaningful mission if they are treated as professionals, allowed to speak their minds and question ideas, and given strong support to improve knowledge and skills.
- Personal mission statements are important contributors to employee self-awareness of work as a calling, reasons to support change and improvement, and acceptance of organizational mission/vision. In short, it is all but impossible to separate the individual from the organizational mission.
- We all have beliefs and expectations about our students, colleagues, and work environment. Reflecting on key beliefs and considering others is vital to improvement.
- We must drive out fear in the organization — for everyone!
- Finally, change is good!

Chapter 7 Sustaining Improvement Over Time

The previous chapters have outlined a series of steps, actions, and strategies designed to help education organizations meet the AYP requirements of *No Child Left Behind*. But just as important, these strategies are applicable to any school or district interested in long-term improvement. The ideas contained in this resource kit, while focused on NCLB requirements, are in reality suggestions for organizational improvement that apply to all districts, schools, and classrooms.

Transformation

Transformation of our classrooms, schools, and school system involves many factors. The following figure explains the transformation being advocated for schools to meet the needs of the 21st century.

