

SWIP – Needs Assessment – Discussion Topics Worksheet

#1 - School Leadership Team

ESSA requires that all stakeholders provide meaningful input in the planning and improvement process. School leadership teams are an effective strategy for ensuring staff participation in creating and implementing the schoolwide plan. Describe the governance of the team. For example:

Who chairs the team?

How are decisions made?

How frequently does the team meet?

What is the process for communicating with district leadership?

How are agendas set?

How is formative and summative student data used for decision making?

How do they ensure that decisions are evidence-based?

Who is responsible for communicating with staff, families, and other stakeholders?

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#2 - School and Community

Describe the school community demographics. For example:

Have there been recent changes in the community, such as school staff, administrator, and board changes; rising unemployment; etc. which have adversely impacted the school community?

What efforts have the school and/or district used in the past three years to address these issues?

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#3 - Academic Achievement

List the school's academic achievement data (i.e. ISAT, IRI, etc.) and the reasons the school has been identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (ELA, Math, Graduation Rate, etc.).

ISAT:

IRI (if applicable):

Graduation Rate (If applicable):

What do the data suggest are strengths and weaknesses in student learning?

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#4 - Student Learning Needs

Based on the specific student learning needs identified, provide a description of the process used to identify the root causes that if solved would result in higher outcomes for students. If for example, ELA achievement (based on ISAT) is below the state average in grades three and above, a root cause analysis would track trends beginning in kindergarten to understand where the gap begins in student learning. A non-example would be focusing all of the improvement efforts on grades four and five.

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#5 - Core Curriculum

What curriculum materials are being used?

To what extent are the materials research/evidence based (as determined by evidence from vendor/ publisher/ reviewer or another source?)

To what extent is the core curriculum delivered with fidelity?

How is fidelity monitored?

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#6 - Core Instruction

To what extent do teachers adjust their instruction to meet the needs of all learners based on assessment data and student feedback?

What formative assessments do teachers use to determine students' needs?

How are students grouped for instruction (homogenous, heterogeneous, mixed)?

How are all students, including each subgroup of students, provided with opportunities to meet proficient and advanced academic achievement levels?

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#7 - Alignment of Teaching and Learning

To what extent is teaching and learning articulated within grade levels?

Within subject areas? To what extent do grade level teachers collaborate about teaching and learning expectations across the grade?

To what extent do students in the same grade/subject area receive a consistent learning experience?

To what extent is teaching and learning articulated across grade levels and subject areas?

To what extent do content teachers from different grades collaborate about teaching and learning progressions across grade levels?

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#8 - Universal Screening

Are all students screened to identify who needs additional support?

Is there Kindergarten screening? How often are students screened and when?

What universal, evidence-based, reliable and valid screening tools are used to identify students at risk? (in ELA? in Math?)

Do the tools have defined cut scores for determining who is at risk? Are different/additional measures used to identify students who are English Learners and not achieving academically?

Students who are socially at risk and not achieving? Are there clear decision rules for determining accuracy of decisions?

How are screening decisions reviewed to determine accuracy and adjust decision rules or follow-up procedures accordingly?

How is the information documented?

How is it shared with teachers, families, school Leadership Team? What are the follow-up procedures?

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#9 - Tiered Instruction and Academic Interventions

In what areas are academic interventions provided?

How often?

To what extent are tiered interventions used to focus on foundational skills that support students' progress in core instruction?

How are tiered interventions coordinated to support student progress in core instruction?

Are the interventions pull-out or push-in?

What is the size of the groups?

What evidence-based programs and instructional practices are used for interventions?

In ELA?

In math?

To what extent do these programs demonstrate efficacy with target populations?

How do the interventions support the needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

How is explicit instruction used?

Who provides tiered interventions (teachers, paraprofessionals, Title I teacher, volunteers)?

If tiered interventions are provided by an instructional paraprofessional, who will plan the instructional activities and who will evaluate the achievement?

How is progress monitored?

What tool is used?

What decision rules are used for determining how progress is being made, when a student needs an instructional change or may be referred to more intensive supports?

How often does progress monitoring take place?

Who participates in the process?

Which students receive progress monitoring?

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#10 - Learning Time

What is the school schedule?

Does it need to be adjusted? (start/end time, four day/five day, number of days per year)

Is there a master schedule that includes intervention and extension?

Are there extended learning opportunities for students who are having difficulty attaining proficiency in grade level standards?

Are there extended learning opportunities to provide access to a well-rounded education?

Are there extended learning opportunities to provide access to an enriched and accelerated curriculum?

If so, how is it built into the daily/weekly schedule? (How many minutes and how many times per week? In what content areas?)

How will it be determined who will participate in extended learning time?

Will all students who participate in extended learning time also have daily access to grade-level content standards?

How will staff know that the extended learning time is enough?

Is summer school part of the intervention process?

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#11 - Non-Academic Student Needs

What activities and strategies are in place to support students' non-academic needs including counseling, school-based mental health programs, specialized instructional support services, mentoring services or others?

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#12 - Well-Rounded Education

Well-rounded education is defined as *“Courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience (Sec. 8101(52))”*

How does your school address well-rounded education?

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#13 - Additional Opportunities for Learning

If applicable for your school, what opportunities are in place for students to learn about and prepare for postsecondary education and the workforce, including career and technical education programs, access to coursework to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual or concurrent enrollment, early college high schools)?

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#14 - School Transitions

If you are an elementary school, what process or activities do you conduct to assist preschool students in successfully transitioning from early childhood programs (such as Head Start, IDEA, or state run preschool) to Kindergarten?

If you are an elementary, what process or activities do you conduct to assist elementary students in successfully transitioning from elementary to middle school?

If you are a middle school, what process or activities do you conduct to assist middle school students in successfully transitioning from middle school to high school?

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#15 - Professional Development

What opportunities are in place (e.g., professional learning communities) to help teachers reflect on and improve their instruction?

To use data from academic assessments to adjust instruction?

To align curriculum and teaching and learning progressions across grade levels and subject areas?

Are PLCs well established and functioning?

Is collaboration time built into the master schedule and the contract?

How often do teachers and other instructional staff participate in school-based professional development?

Who provides professional development?

In what professional development opportunities do paraprofessionals participate?

Are they invited to the same opportunities related to instruction that teachers are invited?

What is the expectation of school leadership for participation in professional development activities?

How is this expectation communicated?

Is there an instructional coach (or similar position)?

How are professional development decisions made?

Who is involved?

What is the relationship between professional development provided at the building level and the district?

How are professional development activities tied to students' academic achievement needs?

How does the school monitor attendance for professional development activities?

Are sign-in sheets completed for each activity?

What professional development does the district/school offer teachers/staff for English learner students?

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#16 - Family and Community Engagement

Do you have a district policy and school plan in place?

How often are these reviewed?

To what extent are strategies for involving families in students' education included?

What strategies, such as family literacy services, are used to increase family and community engagement?

What is the process for disseminating the plan annually?

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#17 - Recruitment and Retention of Effective Teachers

What percentage of teachers meet state certification requirements?

What strategies are in place to recruit and retain effective teachers, particularly in high need subjects?

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#18 - Coordination and Integration with Other Programs

If appropriate and applicable for your school, describe how your Title I-A program (schoolwide and/or school improvement) is developed in coordination and integration with other Federal, State, and local services, resources, and programs, such as violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start programs, adult education programs, career and technical education programs, and schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities.