



The Essential Components

September 2008

The School Effectiveness Framework

Using Indicators and Collecting Evidence

Indicators describe the intended outcome of actions – facts, behaviours, structures or processes which indicate if we are on the right track or not. The School Effectiveness Framework identifies a number of indicators for each of the essential components of an effective school. It is expected that boards and schools will select the indicators that will be most helpful to them in achieving the following:

- a more strategic approach
- an intentional allocation of resources
- equity of outcomes for all students, Kindergarten to Grade 8

At the beginning of each planning cycle, it is important to set specific, measurable criteria for each indicator.

Examples of Evidence consist of a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures for assessing whether and/or to what degree an indicator is being attained. Care must be taken to ensure that the examples of evidence are aligned with the indicator(s) selected, the criteria identified and the action plan.

The measurement methods that can be used to gather evidence might include:

1. observation – informal
2. observation – structured
3. self-report
4. surveys
5. questionnaires
6. performances/demonstrations (e.g., dramatic arts)
7. student achievement data (e.g., work samples, tasks, classroom assessments, board and/or provincial assessments)
8. student contextual data (e.g., attendance)

Essential Component

Student Learning and Achievement

Equity and excellence are foundational to a strong publicly funded education system. Equity of outcomes is about setting high expectations, addressing the instructional needs of all students and closing gaps in student achievement. In truly equitable systems, factors such as race, gender and socio-economic status do not limit students from achieving ambitious outcomes or truncate life chance. While boards support excellence and equity in the Ontario system, schools control the conditions for success.

“Successful schools do not give a second thought to decisive and immediate interventions, including changing schedules, providing double classes for literacy and math, requiring homework supervision, breaking down major projects into incremental steps and otherwise providing preventative assistance for students in need.” (Reeves, 2006)

Four **indicators** which describe the intended outcome of improved student learning and achievement are provided on the following pages. Some examples of **evidence** are suggested as relevant measures for the attainment of each indicator.

District school boards play a critical role in setting ambitious annual targets for all students. They set expectations for student achievement in both literacy and numeracy. Additionally, by disaggregating student achievement data for the system, they are able to a) identify gaps in achievement between specific clusters of students and b) set targets that focus the need for actions that will help close the gaps.

Boards build support and public confidence in education by sharing current information about student learning and achievement with their school communities in an ongoing and transparent manner.



Essential Component

Student Learning and Achievement

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #1 There is a culture of high expectations that supports the belief that all students can learn.</p>	
<p>Indicator #2 All students are engaged in intellectually demanding tasks which require higher-order thinking skills.</p>	
<p>Indicator #3 Instruction takes into account the background and experiences of all students and meets their diverse interests, aptitudes and special needs.</p>	
<p>Indicator #4 There is a clear emphasis on literacy and numeracy achievement.</p>	

Essential Component Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is demonstrated when principals and staff focus their time on the teaching-learning process (not just administrative duties) and work together to bring about growth in student achievement. Their commitment is to learning and working with others – teachers, students, parents and community members – in order to improve the quality of instruction in their schools.

“Learning is not workshops and courses and strategic retreats. It is not school improvement plans or individual leadership development. These are inputs. Rather, learning is developing the organization, day after day, within the culture.”
(Fullan, 2008, p. 28)

Seven **indicators** which describe the intended outcome of supporting instructional leadership are provided on the following pages. Some examples of **evidence** are suggested as relevant measures for the attainment of each indicator.

District school boards play a critical role in supporting instructional leadership through board improvement planning. Using student achievement data, they create Board Improvement Plans (BIPs) which identify a small number of SMART goals for the system linking student needs with professional learning needs. In monitoring the implementation of both the BIP and individual School Improvement Plans (SIPs), board administrators provide mentoring and support for principals, help refine instructional practice and review student progress.

By collecting student achievement data at specific intervals throughout the year, boards are able to examine whether and/or to what degree targets for improved student learning are being met. They are also able to identify where funds should be directed to ensure meaningful, job-embedded professional learning.



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Instructional Leadership

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #1 There are structures, processes and practices in place to guide decision making in the implementation and support of comprehensive literacy and numeracy programs for all students.</p>	
<p>Indicator #2 There are structures in place to optimize the use of instructional learning time.</p>	
<p>Indicator #3 Principals and staff work together to develop, implement and monitor a School Improvement Plan (SIP) focused on continuous improvement in student achievement.</p>	

Essential Component Instructional Leadership

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #4 Job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning is made available to staff, building capacity and informing practice at the school and classroom level.</p>	
<p>Indicator #5 There are shared and clearly understood mechanisms in place for monitoring and analyzing student data and for refining instructional practices to ensure progress.</p>	
<p>Indicator #6 Character development is an integral part of the school culture.</p>	
<p>Indicator #7 Parents and other adults who represent the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school community are engaged in supporting student learning and achievement.</p>	

Essential Component Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment is a process that is integral to the teaching-learning process; it occurs at the outset of work, as work progresses and at the conclusion. Assessment begins and ends with the classroom teacher, leading to ongoing development of effective instruction, reassessment and creation of opportunities for achievement based on changing student needs. It is well documented in the research literature that without all three forms of assessment – for, as and of learning – in place, instruction cannot have its intended impact on student learning.

“When anyone is trying to learn, feedback about the effort has three elements: recognition of the desired goal, evidence about the present position and some understanding of a way to close the gap between the two ... if formative assessment is to be productive, pupils should be trained in self-assessment so that they can understand the main purposes of their learning and thereby grasp what they need to do to achieve.” (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 143)

Four **indicators** which describe the intended outcome of improved student learning and achievement are provided on the following pages. Some examples of **evidence** are suggested as relevant measures for the attainment of each indicator.

District school boards play a critical role in establishing fair and equitable assessment policies to guide decision making and actions at the school and classroom level. They are aware of the necessity of collecting and disaggregating student achievement data at several predetermined points throughout the year in order to a) ascertain progress toward the SMART goals stated in the Board Improvement Plan and b) determine the next set of actions to ensure continuing student achievement.

Collecting professional learning data throughout the year is also valuable for an accurate assessment of the impact of board-supported professional learning on instructional capacity and student learning.



Essential Component Assessment and Evaluation

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #1 A variety of valid and reliable assessment data is collected, disaggregated and used to inform planning.</p>	
<p>Indicator #2 Common assessment tasks are collaboratively crafted and the resulting student work is analyzed to ensure consistency of standards within and across grade levels, with the goal of equity of outcomes for all students.</p>	
<p>Indicator #3 Assessment practices which allow teachers and students to share responsibility for learning are in place.</p>	
<p>Indicator #4 Communication practices are in place to ensure parents are informed in a timely and meaningful manner about student learning and progress.</p>	

Essential Component Curriculum and Instruction

Empirical research and “best practice” reports from jurisdictions around the world have identified a number of strategies which contribute to improved student learning. These powerful approaches to the teaching-learning process have a record of success at the classroom, school and board level. When used in conjunction with current assessment data and rich background information about students, these evidence-based strategies will increase student achievement.

“We should be searching for multiple perspectives of rightness, guided by the diverse needs of learners and sound instructional principles, practices and craft knowledge.” (Allington)

“Student understanding of the key ideas embedded in the content standards, then, should be the focus of any school improvement initiative.” (McTighe & Thomas, 2003, p. 52)

Six **indicators** which describe the intended outcome of using evidence-based strategies to improve instruction are provided on the following pages. Some examples of **evidence** are suggested as relevant measures for the attainment of each indicator.

District school boards play a critical role in establishing the beliefs and values of the organization, among them that it is the collective responsibility of staff to create conditions that will enable all students to demonstrate high levels of achievement. Boards ensure that differentiating instruction is provided to meet the diverse learning needs of students and that a wide range of instructional strategies is in place.

Boards reinforce the importance of the alignment between the teaching-learning process and Ontario curriculum. They establish the necessity of comprehensive literacy and mathematics programs to equip students for success in all the content areas. They promote the notion that the study of language and mathematics needs to be integrated with the study of other subjects.

Other support to schools includes a clearly articulated resource selection policy that reflects the need for learning resources to be current, culturally relevant and inclusive. Board policy also assigns appropriate funding for the acquisition of learning resources and job-embedded professional learning,



Essential Component Curriculum and Instruction

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #1 Instruction is based on the expectations of the Ontario curriculum.</p>	
<p>Indicator #2 There is intentional cross-curricular application of the knowledge and skills learned through literacy and numeracy programs.</p>	
<p>Indicator #3 There are comparable learning experiences, a range of differentiated approaches to instruction and required interventions within grades and a continuum of knowledge, skills and learning across grades.</p>	

Essential Component Curriculum and Instruction

INDICATORS	SOME EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Indicator #4 Resources for students are relevant, current and inclusive.</p>	
<p>Indicator #5 Students develop literacy knowledge, skills and related technological skills to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, view, represent and think critically about ideas.</p>	
<p>Indicator #6 Students develop mathematical understanding, problem-solving skills and related technological skills that can be applied in their daily lives and in the future workplace through mathematical tasks that are practical and relevant.</p>	

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