

Pattonville School District

**School Improvement Team Handbook
(Fall 2008)**

Purpose

School Improvement Plans are developed by every school building community for the purpose of achieving CSIP Goal 1: *Students demonstrate significant improvement in their understanding and application of the Show Me Standards.*

Parameters

School Improvement Plans are developed through a process called “participatory management” which engages parents, staff, students and the community in the sharing of authority and responsibility for improving student achievement. This process is guided by the following Board of Education Parameters:

1. No plan can be approved unless you can show it supports the district’s purpose and CSIP plan.
2. Must have support of your school community.
3. Plan must be generally fiscally neutral.
4. Must discuss plan with feeder and receiving schools/organization before moving forward.
5. What research supports your plan?
6. Plan to evaluate plan annually.
7. No plan will be accepted unless legally, ethically, and morally correct.

Team Membership

Teams are composed of at least 50% parents/community members/students who are not employees of the district. Each team determines the number of members. Team membership is reviewed annually at the start of each school year to ensure compliance with the 50% rule. Teams should have a staggered rotation schedule that determines when members move on and off the team.

Team Responsibilities

Working within the Board of Education Parameters and the District Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, school improvement teams serve as the Steering Committee for improvement efforts at their school. The teams are responsible for developing their School Improvement Plan, monitoring progress on the action steps, and updating the plan at least every two years. This process includes evaluating each action step to determine its contribution to achieving Goal 1 and its related targets. In addition, school improvement plans are to be inclusive of district-wide improvement efforts (e.g. Literacy Project/Balanced Literacy) and supportive of student learning as evidenced in the district curriculum and assessments. Specifically, School Improvement Team research and recommend best practices related to the following areas:

- Instruction: strategies that lead to improved student performance on Missouri's Show-Me Standards, are consistent with district-wide expectations, and promote student responsibility for learning.
- Structure: big picture school design that promotes student achievement and responsibility (e.g. time for professional development, alternative delivery strategies such as school within a school, multiage or looping)
- Climate: the affective domain that promotes relationship building and defines that school as a caring community for students, parents, staff and community.

Research for developing and updating School Improvement Plans derives from multiple sources, including: journals, articles, standardized testing data, classroom assessment data which does not identify the student, site visits, scientifically-based research studies and other sources deemed appropriate by the team. Strategies that teams choose should be consistent with literature and research studies that point toward improvements in student achievement and/or student responsibility.

School Improvement Teams are also responsible for making sure that their plan includes professional development that supports successful implementation of the action steps identified in their plan. The professional development plan should address what will be learned (content), when and how learning will occur (process and time), who will be involved in the training (audience) and how effectiveness of the training will be measured.

Principal's Authority

The principal is responsible for ensuring the School Improvement Plan is implemented. The principal has authority (within district policy/procedures and state/federal statutes) over the following areas in his/her building:

- School Structure (e.g scheduling)
- Finance (budget within allocation)
- Staffing (within allocation)
- Discipline (at the level of office referral)
- Professional Development (implementation)
- Staff Evaluation

The Planning Process

Effective School Improvement Teams need a working set of procedures that govern their behavior. These procedures include having trained **facilitators**, **keeping careful minutes** of the team's work, using a **process observer**, defining **consensus**, having strategies for **pyramiding** with the community, and having guidelines for **community input** during the school improvement team meetings. Teams may wish to formalize these processes in the form of **by-laws**.

Facilitator(s) – a parent and staff member who, along with the principal: design the meeting agenda, ensure that minutes are approved and provided to the school community, help the team monitor progress on action steps, and guide research on future improvement efforts.

Keeper of the minutes – records and distributes meeting minutes, record action items and persons responsible and provides a verbal summary at the conclusion of the meetings. The keeper will receive amendments prior to the meeting and inform membership of those amendments so that all members have accurate information.

Process Observer – a committee member who observes the interactions of the group during the meeting and reports back to the group what was said, the level of participation, and the tone of the meeting.

Consensus – a group decision (which some members may not feel is the best decision, but which they can live with, support, and commit themselves not to undermine) arrived at without voting. Through the process, all issues are discussed completely, all members feel they have been adequately heard, and everyone has equal power and responsibility.

Pyramiding – each member of the council agrees to interact with three people not

on the council to acquire feed back about the topics being discussed at council meetings. This involves each member asking a specific question(s) and reporting back what they found out at the next meeting, web site: (posting minutes, agendas, list members and post plans), electronic messaging, special e-mail for school improvement team, principal's newsletters (including summary of meeting and list members), updates at staff meetings.

Community Input – school improvement team meetings are open to the public. Teams may choose to adopt processes whereby community members who are not members of the team have an opportunity to make comments. This choice is at the discretion of each team.

By-Laws – written procedures that guide how a school improvement team is organized and conducts their work.