

Continuous Improvement Continuums

Self-assessment Activity

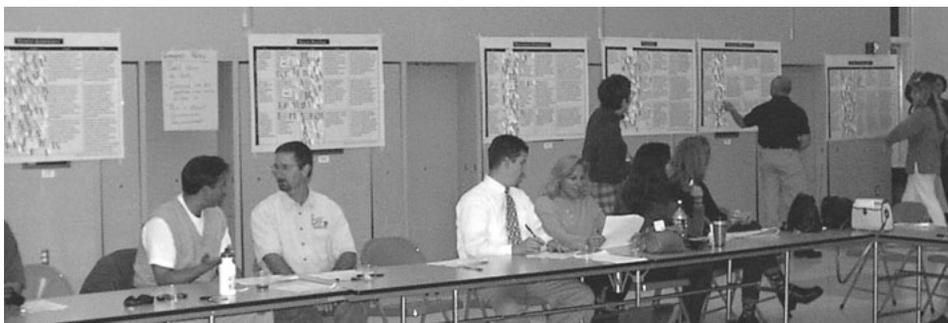
Purpose Assessing on the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* will help staffs see where their systems are right now with respect to continuous improvement, and ultimately show that they are making progress over time. The discussion that leads to consensus is the most valuable piece of this activity. In addition to helping the entire staff see where the *school* is, the discussion begins to write the sections of the school portfolio for them.

Target Audience School staff

Time Three hours for the first assessment; 90 minutes for subsequent assessments.

Materials One set of the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* (CICs), enlarged to poster size, a copy of the CICs for staff members, chart pad paper, markers, masking tape or tacks to hang the large *Continuums*, colored dots or flags, 3x5 post-its, *The School Portfolio PowerPoint* presentation or transparencies, CIC report templates, and computer for notetaking.

Book Reference Chapter 5



Process Protocol Hang the enlarged posters of the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* around the room. Consider if you will have staff use one color for all continuums (recommended so the next assessment can be in another color). Read about where the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* came from, that they represent the theoretical flow of school improvement, going from a reactive (1) to a proactive (5) school. (See Appendix A of *The School Portfolio* [Bernhardt, 1999].) Have a person available to record the conversation.

1. Establish ground rules for the assessment. We want to make sure everyone understands that the conversation is safe and confidential. Also clarify why it is important to do this activity.

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2. Introduce the first section of the school portfolio—*Information and Analysis*. Ask staff to read the *Information and Analysis Continuous Improvement Continuum* and see if they can recognize where the school is right now, with respect to *Approach*, *Implementation*, and *Outcome*. Start with a 1 and move to a 5. Keep the group moving and try to avoid word-smithing the *Continuums*.



3. Direct staff to walk over to the *Information and Analysis Continuum* and place a colorful dot or flag where they believe the school is with respect to *Approach*, *Implementation*, and *Outcome*. We call this “dotocracy.”
4. After everyone has placed her or his dot, review what you see. Focusing on *Approach*, ask for discussion of why they thought the school was a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. Record the highlights of the discussion.
5. Ask for a show of hands of where everyone believes the school is after the discussion. If one number is becoming clearly favored, ask if there is anyone who could not live with this number as a baseline assessment of this school’s *Approach to Information and Analysis*. If no one opposes, write that number on a post-it and place it on the large continuum to represent the consensus decision of the group. If there is not a number that is clearly favored after the first discussion, continue the discussion. You can assist if there is a stalemate by systematically asking what the school has for *Information and Analysis*, and walking through each number in *Approach*, clarifying what the school would have to have to be a specific number. Ask again for a show of hands.
6. Continue with *Implementation* and *Outcome*.

Continuous Improvement Continuums

Self-assessment Activity

- When consensus on the three sections are complete, ask for the “Next Steps.” What do we need to do to move up? Or to become the next solid number?
- Continue with the next six *Continuums*. After *Information and Analysis*, you can usually introduce two *Continuums* at a time and then ask staff to “vote.”
- As staff is reading the next *Continuum*, use the time to write down highlights of the discussion on the just completed *Continuum*. If you have a laptop and templates provided on the CD, you will be able to leave the school with a complete report that day. The template reveals the comments made most often.

Comments to the Facilitator

We want the *Continuous Improvement Continuums* to add a sense of urgency for improvement. To that end, do not let staff average their scores or rate themselves too high. Make sure they think about next steps.

If you have someone assisting with the facilitation from the staff, that person could listen for *What do we have now?* and *Other things we need to get or do*. Do not forget to brainstorm next steps.

Again, averaging the scores does not inspire change—especially on the first assessment. If the discussion hangs between two numbers, go to the lower number.

Make sure everyone knows the emphasis is on consensus and not just a vote. We want everyone to win!

Education for the Future Initiative Continuous Improvement Continuums						
INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS						
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	
Approach	Data or information about student performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way; there is no way to determine what needs to change at the school, based on data.	There is no systematic process, but some teacher and student information is collected and a problem solver asks to establish student learning standards.	There is systematic reliance on hard data related to student performance (e.g., attendance, test scores, surveys, etc.) as a basis for decision making at the classroom level as well as at the school level. Changes are based on a comprehensive study of data to meet the needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school. Teachers engage students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school. Teachers engage students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.	
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make changes. Student dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as drop-out rates and enrollment. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling.	Some data are tracked, such as drop-out rates and enrollment. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling. Student evaluations and performances are analyzed by teachers in all classrooms.	Data are used to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies for all student learning. Students' historical performances are analyzed and utilized for diagnostic purposes. Student evaluations and performances are analyzed by teachers in all classrooms.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented to the delight of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented to the delight of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Only anecdotal and hypothetical information is available about student performance, behavior, and satisfaction. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the school and dependent upon individual teachers and their efforts.	Information collected on all student learning trends, such as drop-out rates and enrollment, are analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.	An information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear in many classrooms and schoolwide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using data collected.	Students are delighted with the school's instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. Teachers use data to predict and prevent potential problems.	Students are delighted with the school's instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. Teachers use data to predict and prevent potential problems.

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Fall Assessment

Education for the Future Initiative Continuous Improvement Continuums						
INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS						
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	
Approach	Data or information about student performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way; there is no way to determine what needs to change at the school, based on data.	There is no systematic process, but some teacher and student information is collected and used to problem-solve and establish student learning standards.	There is systematic reliance on hard data related to student performance (e.g., attendance, test scores, surveys, etc.) as a basis for decision making at the classroom level as well as at the school level. Changes are based on a comprehensive study of data to meet the needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school. Teachers engage students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school. Teachers engage students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.	
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make changes. Student dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as drop-out rates and enrollment. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling.	Some data are tracked, such as drop-out rates and enrollment. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling. Student evaluations and performances are analyzed by teachers in all classrooms.	Data are used to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies for all student learning. Students' historical performances are analyzed and utilized for diagnostic purposes. Student evaluations and performances are analyzed by teachers in all classrooms.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented to the delight of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented to the delight of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Only anecdotal and hypothetical information is available about student performance, behavior, and satisfaction. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the school and dependent upon individual teachers and their efforts.	Information collected on all student learning trends, such as drop-out rates and enrollment, are analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.	An information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear in many classrooms and schoolwide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using data collected.	Students are delighted with the school's instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. Teachers use data to predict and prevent potential problems.	Students are delighted with the school's instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. Teachers use data to predict and prevent potential problems.

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Spring Assessment

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Data or information about school and student performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way. The district does not provide assistance in helping schools understand what needs to change at the school and classroom levels, based on data.	There is no systematic process for data collection, analysis, and use across the district. Some school, teacher, and student information are collected and used to problem solve and meet accountability expectations.	School district collects all types of data, including demographics, student learning, perceptions, and school processes. The information is used to drive the strategic quality plan for district and school improvement.	There is systematic and systemic reliance on data (including data for all student groups) as a basis for decision making at the district, school, and classroom levels. Changes are based on the study of data to meet the educational needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school district throughout the school year. The district engages administrators, teachers, and students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all schools, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school and district quality.
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make district or school changes. Student dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as attendance, enrollment, student learning results, and drop-out rates for accountability. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling and district operations.	The district collects information on current and former students (e.g., demographics, student learning, and perceptions), analyzes and uses it in conjunction with future trends for planning and supports schools in doing the same. Identified areas for improvement are tracked over time.	Data, including school processes, are used to provide feedback to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies on all student learning. Schools' historical data are graphed and utilized for diagnosis and leadership purposes by the district. Contributing causes are analyzed.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented across the district. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure and to evaluate all processes and programs. Contributing causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Only anecdotal and hypothetical information are available about student performance, behavior, and perceptions. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the district depending upon individual administrators and their efforts.	Information collected about school needs, effective assessment, and instructional practices are shared with all school and district staff and used to plan for school and district improvement. Information helps staff understand pressing issues, analyze information for "contributing causes," and track results for improvement.	A comprehensive information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear in most schools and districtwide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using the data, including the analysis of contributing causes.	Schools are delighted with their instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all schools and students. Schools use data to predict and prevent potential problems. No student falls through the cracks. Districtwide, only "effective" programs are in operation.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	<p>Instructional and organizational processes critical to student success are not identified. Little distinction of student learning differences is made. Some teachers in some schools believe that not all students can achieve.</p>	<p>Some data are collected on student background and performance trends. Learning gaps are noted to direct improvement of instruction. It is known that student learning standards must be used to guide instruction and learning.</p>	<p>The district encourages and supports each school in creating a shared vision. Each staff agrees and commits to what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach, how they will assess, and how they and students will treat each other. Student learning standards are analyzed and a continuum of learning is created across the district. Student performance data are collected and compared to the standards in order to analyze how to improve learning for all students.</p>	<p>Formative and summative data on student achievement are used throughout the district to pursue the improvement of student learning. The district ensures that teachers collaborate to implement appropriate instruction and assessment strategies for meeting student learning standards articulated across grade levels. All teachers believe that all students can learn.</p>	<p>The district makes an effort to exceed student achievement expectations. Innovative instructional changes are made to anticipate learning needs and improve student achievement. District makes sure that teachers are able to predict characteristics impacting student achievement and to know how to perform from a small set of internal quality measures to ensure success.</p>
Implementation	<p>All students are taught the same way. There is no communication between the district and schools about students' academic needs or learning styles. There are no analyses of how to improve instruction.</p>	<p>Some effort is made to track and analyze student achievement trends on a districtwide basis. District begins to understand the needs and learning gaps within the schools.</p>	<p>Teachers across the district study effective instruction and assessment strategies to implement standards and to increase students' learning. Student feedback, analysis of achievement, and school processes data are used in conjunction with implementation support strategies.</p>	<p>There is a systematic focus on implementing student learning standards and on the improvement of student learning districtwide. Effective instruction and assessment strategies are implemented in each school. District supports teachers supporting one another with approaches such as peer coaching, lesson study, and/or action research focused on implementing instruction that lead to increased achievement and the attainment of the shared vision.</p>	<p>All teachers correlate critical instructional and assessment strategies with objective indicators of quality student achievement. A comparative analysis of actual individual student performance to student learning standards is utilized to adjust teaching strategies to ensure a progression of learning for all students.</p>
Outcome	<p>There is wide variation in student attitudes and achievement with undesirable results. There is high dissatisfaction among students with learning. Student background is used as an excuse for low student achievement.</p>	<p>There is some evidence that student achievement trends are available to schools and are being used. There is much effort, but minimal observable results in improving student achievement.</p>	<p>There is an increase in communication among district and schools, students, and teachers regarding student learning. Teachers learn about effective instructional strategies that will implement the shared vision, student learning standards, and how to meet the needs of students. The schools make some gains.</p>	<p>Increased student achievement is evident districtwide. The district leadership knows what it takes to support schools in improving student achievement. Student morale, attendance, and behavior are good. Teacher morale and attendance are good. Teachers converse often with each other about preventing student failure. Areas for further attention are clear.</p>	<p>The district, schools, and teachers conduct self-assessments to continuously improve performance. Improvements in student achievement are evident and clearly caused by teachers' and students' understandings of individual student learning standards, linked to appropriate and effective instructional and assessment strategies. A continuum of learning results. No student falls through the cracks.</p>

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

QUALITY PLANNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	No quality plan or process exists. Data are neither used nor considered important in planning.	The district realizes the importance of reviewing data, and having a mission, vision, and one comprehensive plan. However, the district currently requires schools to focus their plans on solving problems and closing gaps.	A comprehensive plan to achieve the district vision is developed. Plan includes evaluation and continuous improvement.	One focused and integrated districtwide continuous improvement plan for implementing a continuous improvement process is put into action. All district efforts are focused on the implementation of this plan that represents the achievement of the district vision.	A plan for the continuous improvement of the district, with a focus on students, is put into place. There is excellent articulation and integration of all elements in the district due to quality planning. Leadership team ensures all elements are implemented by all appropriate parties.
Implementation	There is no knowledge of or direction for quality planning. Budget is allocated on an as-needed basis. Many plans exist.	School district staff begins continuous improvement planning efforts by reviewing all data, laying out major steps to a shared vision, by identifying values and beliefs, the purpose of the district, a mission, vision, and student learning standards.	Implementation goals, strategies, actions, responsibilities, due dates, and timelines are spelled out. Support structures for implementing the districtwide plan are set in place.	The continuous improvement plan is implemented through effective procedures in all areas of the district. Everyone commits to implementing the plan aligned to the vision, mission, and values and beliefs. All share responsibility for accomplishing district goals.	Districtwide goals, mission, vision, and student learning standards are shared and articulated throughout the district and with feeder schools. The attainment of identified student learning standards is linked to planning and implementation of effective instruction that meets students' needs. Leaders at all levels are developing expertise because quality planning is the norm.
Outcome	There is no evidence of comprehensive planning. Staff work is carried out in isolation. A continuum of learning for students is absent.	The school district staff understands the benefits of working together to implement a comprehensive continuous improvement plan, they just have not done it yet. Current improvements are neither systematic nor integrated districtwide.	One plan exists. There is evidence that the district plan is being <i>implemented</i> in some areas of the district. Improvements are neither systematic nor integrated districtwide.	A districtwide continuous improvement plan is known to all. Results from working toward the quality improvement goals are evident throughout the district. Planning is ongoing and inclusive of all stakeholders.	Evidence of effective teaching and learning results in significant improvement of student achievement attributed to quality planning at all levels of the district organization. Teachers and administrators understand and share the district mission and vision. Quality planning is seamless and all schools demonstrate evidence of accountability.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

LEADERSHIP

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	The School Board is decision maker. Decisions are reactive to state, district, and federal mandates. There is no knowledge of continuous improvement.	A shared decision-making structure is put into place and discussions begin on how to achieve a district vision. Most decisions are focused on solving problems and are reactive.	District leadership team is committed to continuous improvement. Leadership seeks inclusion of all school sectors and supports collaborative teams by making time provisions for their work.	District leadership team represents a true shared decision-making structure. All teams understand their roles and carry them out in the implementation of a comprehensive continuous improvement plan.	A strong continuous improvement structure is set into place that allows for input from all sectors of the district, school, and community, ensuring strong communication, flexibility, and refinement of approach and beliefs. The district vision is student focused, based on data and appropriate for district/school/community values, and meeting all student needs.
Implementation	The School Board makes all decisions, with little or no input from administrators, teachers, the community, or students. Leadership inspects for mistakes.	The shared decision-making structure is implemented in some places and not others. Structure is mostly used to solve problems or close gaps.	District values and beliefs are identified; the purpose of district is defined; a district mission and student learning standards are developed with representative input. A structure for studying approaches to achieving student learning standards is established.	Decisions about budget and implementation of the vision are made within teams, by the school board, by the leadership team, by the individual schools, and by the full staff, as appropriate. All decisions are communicated to the leadership team and to the full staff.	The vision is implemented and articulated across all grade levels and into feeder schools. Quality standards are reinforced throughout the district. All members of the district community understand and apply the quality standards. The leadership team has systematic interactions and involvement with district administrators, teachers, parents, community, and students about the district's direction. Necessary resources are available to implement and measure staff learning related to student learning standards.
Outcome	Although the decision-making process is clearly known, decisions are reactive and lack focus and consistency. There is no evidence of staff commitment to a shared vision. Students and parents do not feel they are being heard.	Quality leadership techniques are used sporadically. Critical areas for improvement are identified.	The mission provides a focus for all district and school improvement and guides the action to the vision. The school district community is committed to continuous improvement. Faculty feel included in shared decision making.	There is evidence that the district leadership team listens to all levels of the organization. Implementation of the continuous improvement plan is linked to student learning standards and the guiding principles of the school. Leadership capacity for implementing the vision throughout the district is evident.	Site-based management and shared decision making truly exists. Teachers understand and display an intimate knowledge of how the school and district operate. Schools support and communicate with each other in the implementation of quality strategies. Teachers implement the vision in their classrooms and can determine how their new approaches meet student needs and lead to the attainment of student learning standards. Leaders are standards-driven at all levels. Instructional coherence results.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	<p>There is no professional learning. Teachers, principals, and district and school staff are seen as interchangeable parts that can be replaced. Professional learning is external and usually equated to attending a conference alone. Hierarchy determines “haves” and “have-nots.”</p>	<p>The “cafeteria” approach to professional learning is used, whereby individual teachers and administrators choose what they want to take, without regard to an overall district plan.</p>	<p>The shared vision, district continuous improvement plan and student needs are used to target focused professional learning for all employees. Staff is inserviced on relevant instructional and leadership strategies.</p>	<p>Professional learning, data-gathering methods and collaboration are used by all teachers and administrators, and are directed toward the goals of the shared vision and the continuous improvement of the district and schools. Teachers have ongoing conversations about student achievement data. All staff members receive training in their content areas. Systems thinking is considered in all decisions.</p>	<p>Leadership and staff continuously improve all aspects of the learning organization through an innovative, data-informed, and comprehensive continuous improvement process that prevents student failures. Effective job-embedded professional learning is ongoing for implementing the vision for student success. Traditional teacher evaluations are replaced by collegial coaching and action research focused on student learning standards. Policies set professional learning as a priority budget line-item. Professional learning is planned, aligned, and leads to the achievement of student learning standards, and the shared vision.</p>
Implementation	<p>District staff, principals, teachers, and school staff performance is controlled and inspected. Performance evaluations are used to detect mistakes.</p>	<p>Teacher professional learning is sporadic and unfocused, lacking an approach for implementing new procedures and processes. Some leadership training begins to take place.</p>	<p>The district ensures that teachers are involved in year-round quality professional learning. The school and district staff are trained in shared decision making, team building concepts, effective communication, collaboration strategies, and data analysis.</p>	<p>Teachers, in teams, continuously set and implement student achievement goals. Leadership considers these goals and provides necessary support structures for collaboration. Teachers utilize effective support approaches as they implement new instruction and assessment strategies. Coaching and feedback structures are in place. Use of new knowledge and skills is evident.</p>	<p>Teams passionately support each other in the pursuit of quality improvement at all levels. Teachers make bold changes in instruction and assessment strategies focused on student learning standards and student learning styles. A teacher as action researcher model is implemented. Staffwide conversations focus on systemic reflection and improvement. Administrators and teachers are strong leaders.</p>
Outcome	<p>There is no professional growth and no staff or student performance improvement. There exists a high turnover rate of employees, especially administrators. Attitudes and approaches filter down to teachers and students.</p>	<p>The effectiveness of professional learning is not known or analyzed. Teachers feel helpless and unsupported in making schoolwide changes.</p>	<p>Teachers, working in teams, feel supported by the district and begin to feel they can make changes. Evidence shows that shared decision making works.</p>	<p>A collegial school district is evident. Effective classroom strategies are practiced and articulated schoolwide. These strategies, focused on student learning standards, are reflective of professional learning aimed at ensuring student learning and the implementation of the shared vision.</p>	<p>True systemic change and improved student achievement result because teachers are knowledgeable of and implement effective, differentiated teaching strategies and formative assessments for individual student learning gains. Teachers’ repertoire of skills is enhanced and students are achieving. Professional learning is driving learning at all levels. A continuum of learning exists in each school.</p>

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no system for input from parents, business, or community. Status quo is desired for managing the school district.	Partnerships are sought, but mostly for money and things.	School district has knowledge of why partnerships are important and seeks to include businesses and parents in a strategic fashion related to student learning standards for increased student learning.	School district seeks effective win-win business and community partnerships and parent involvement to implement the vision. Desired outcomes are clearly identified. A solid plan for partnership development exists.	Community, parent, and business partnerships become integrated across all student groupings. The benefits of outside involvement are known by all. Parent and business involvement in student learning is refined. Student learning regularly takes place beyond the school and district walls.
Implementation	Barriers are erected to close out involvement of outsiders. Outsiders are managed for least impact on status quo.	A team is assigned to get partners and to receive input from parents, the community, and business in the school district.	Involvement of business, community, and parents begins to take place in some schools and after school hours related to the vision. Partners begin to realize how they can support each other in achieving district goals. District staff understand what partners need from the partnership.	There is systematic utilization of parents, community, and businesses districtwide. Areas in which the active use of these partnerships benefit student learning are clear.	Partnership development is articulated across all district groupings. Parents, community, business, and educators work together in an innovative fashion to increase student learning and to prepare students for college and careers in the Twenty-First Century. Partnerships are evaluated for continuous improvement.
Outcome	There is little or no involvement of parents, business, or community at-large. The district is a closed, isolated system.	Much effort is given to establishing partnerships. Some spotty trends emerge, such as receiving donated equipment.	Some substantial gains are achieved in implementing partnerships. Some student achievement increases can be attributed to this involvement.	Gains in student satisfaction with learning and school are clearly related to partnerships. All partners benefit.	Previously non-achieving students enjoy learning with excellent achievement. Community, business, and home become common places for student learning, while school becomes a place where parents come for further education. Partnerships enhance what the school district does for students.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for School Districts

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Neither goals nor strategies exist for the evaluation and continuous improvement of the district organization or for elements of the organization.	The approach to continuous improvement and evaluation is problem-solving. If there are no problems, or if solutions can be made quickly, there is no need for improvement or analyses. Changes in parts of the system are not coordinated with all other parts.	Some elements of the district organization are evaluated for effectiveness. Some elements are improved on the basis of the evaluation findings.	All elements of the district's operations are evaluated for improvement. Efforts are consistently made to ensure congruence of the elements with respect to the continuum of learning within and across schools.	All aspects of the district organization are rigorously evaluated and improved on a continuous basis. Students, and the maintenance of a continuum of learning for students, become the focus of all aspects of the school district improvement process.
Implementation	With no overall plan for evaluation and continuous improvement, strategies are changed by individual schools, teachers, and/or administrators only when something sparks the need to improve. Reactive decisions and activities are a daily mode of operation.	Isolated changes are made in some areas of the district organization in response to problem incidents. Changes are not preceded by comprehensive analyses, such as an understanding of the contributing causes of undesirable results. The effectiveness of the elements of the district organization is not known.	Elements of the district organization are improved on the basis of comprehensive data analyses, analyses of contributing causes of undesirable results, and the analysis of process effectiveness.	Continuous improvement analyses of student achievement and instructional strategies are rigorously reinforced within each classroom and across learning levels to develop a continuum of learning for students and to prevent student failure.	Comprehensive continuous improvement becomes the way of doing business throughout the district. Teachers continuously improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of instructional strategies based on student feedback and performance. All aspects of the district organization are improved to support teachers' efforts.
Outcome	Individuals struggle with system failure. Finger pointing and blaming others for failure occur. The effectiveness of strategies is not known. Mistakes are repeated.	Problems are solved only temporarily and few positive changes result. Additionally, unintended and undesirable consequences often appear in other parts of the system. Many aspects of the school district are incongruent, keeping the district from reaching its vision.	Evidence of effective improvement strategies is observable. Positive changes are made and maintained due to comprehensive data and process analyses, and evaluation.	Teachers become astute at assessing and in predicting the impact of their instructional strategies on individual student achievement. Sustainable improvements in student achievement are evident at all grade levels due to continuous improvement supported by the district.	The district becomes a congruent and effective learning organization. Only instruction and assessment strategies that produce quality student achievement are used. A true continuum of learning is in place for all students and staff. The impact of improvements is measured.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Data or information about student performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way; there is no way to determine what needs to change at the school, based on data.	There is no systematic process, but some teacher and student information is collected and used to problem solve and meet accountability expectations.	School collects all types of data, including demographics, student learning, perceptions, and school processes. The information is used to drive the strategic quality plan for school change.	There is systematic reliance on data (including data for subgroups) as a basis for decision making at the classroom level as well as at the school level. Changes are based on the study of data to meet the needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with the school. Teachers engage students in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make changes. Student dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as student learning results, attendance, and behavior. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas of schooling.	School collects information on current and former students (e.g., student achievement, demographics, perceptions), analyzes and uses it in conjunction with future trends for planning. Identified areas for improvement are tracked over time.	Data are used to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies on all student learning. Students' historical performances are graphed and utilized for diagnostics. Student evaluations and performances are analyzed by teachers in all classrooms, along with process data.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students are implemented to the delight of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Contributing causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Only anecdotal and hypothetical information are available about student performance, behavior, and satisfaction. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the school and dependent upon individual teachers and their efforts.	Information collected about student and parent needs, assessments, and instructional practices is shared with the school staff and used to plan for change. Information helps staff understand pressing issues, analyze information for "contributing causes," and track results for improvement.	A comprehensive information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear in many classrooms and schoolwide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using data, systemwide.	Students are delighted with the school's instructional processes and proud of their own capabilities to learn and assess their own growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. Teachers use data to predict and prevent potential problems, and optimize their results.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Instructional and organizational processes critical to student success are not identified. Little distinction of student learning differences is made. Some teachers believe that not all students can achieve.	Some data are collected on student background and performance trends. Learning gaps are noted to direct improvement of instruction. It is known that student learning standards must be used to guide instruction and learning.	A shared vision is created. Each staff agree and commit to what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach, how they will assess, and how they and students will treat each other and students (teachers). Student learning standards are identified for implementation, and a continuum of learning is created throughout the school. Student performance data are collected and compared to the standards in order to analyze how to improve learning for all students.	Data on student achievement and the achievement of student learning standards are used throughout the school to pursue the improvement of student learning. Teachers collaborate to implement appropriate instruction and assessment strategies for meeting student learning standards articulated across grade levels. All teachers believe that all students can learn.	School makes an effort to exceed student achievement expectations. Innovative instructional changes are made to anticipate learning needs and improve student achievement. Teachers are able to predict characteristics impacting student achievement and to know how to perform from a small set of internal quality measures.
Implementation	All students are taught the same way. There is no communication with students about their academic needs or learning styles. There are no analyses of how to improve instruction.	Some effort is made to track and analyze student achievement trends on a schoolwide basis. Teachers begin to understand the needs and learning gaps of students.	Teachers commit to effective instruction and assessment strategies to implement standards and to increase their students' learning. Student feedback and analysis of achievement data are used in conjunction with implementation support strategies, such as lesson study and demonstration lessons.	There is a systematic focus on implementing student learning standards and on the improvement of student learning schoolwide. Effective instruction and assessment strategies are implemented in each classroom. Teachers support one another with peer coaching, lesson study, and/or action research focused on implementing strategies that lead to increased achievement and the attainment of the shared vision.	All teachers correlate critical instructional and assessment strategies with objective indicators of quality student achievement. A comparative analysis of actual individual student performance to student learning standards is utilized to adjust teaching strategies to ensure a progression of learning for all students.
Outcome	There is wide variation in student attitudes and achievement with undesirable results. There is high dissatisfaction among students with learning. Student background is used as an excuse for low student achievement.	There is some evidence that student achievement trends are available to teachers and are being used. There is much effort, but minimal observable results in improving student achievement.	There is an increase in communication between students and teachers, and teachers and teachers, regarding student learning. Teachers learn about effective instructional strategies that will implement the shared vision, student learning standards, and meet the needs of their students. They make some gains.	Increased student achievement is evident schoolwide. Student morale, attendance, and behavior are good. Teacher morale is high. Teachers converse often with each other about preventing student failure. Areas for further attention are clear.	Students and teachers conduct self-assessments to continuously improve performance. Improvements in student achievement are evident and clearly caused by teachers' and students' understandings of individual student learning standards, linked to appropriate and effective instructional and assessment strategies. A continuum of learning results. No students fall through the cracks.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

QUALITY PLANNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	No quality plan or process exists. Data are neither used nor considered important in planning.	The staff realize the importance of a mission, vision, and one comprehensive school plan; however, the current school improvement plan focuses on solving problems and closing gaps.	A comprehensive continuous school improvement plan to achieve the shared vision is developed. Plan includes evaluation and continuous improvement.	One focused and integrated continuous school improvement plan for implementing the shared vision is put into action. All school efforts are focused on the implementation of this plan that represents the achievement of the vision.	A plan for the continuous improvement of the school, with a focus on students, is put into place. There is excellent articulation and integration of all elements in the school due to quality planning. Leadership team ensures all elements are implemented by all appropriate parties.
Implementation	There is no knowledge of or direction for quality planning. Budget is allocated on an as-needed basis. Many plans exist.	School community begins continuous school improvement planning efforts by laying out major steps to create a shared vision, and implementing student learning standards.	Implementation goals, responsibilities, due dates, and timelines are spelled out in the comprehensive continuous school improvement plan to implement the shared vision. Support structures to implement the vision, such as teams, for implementing the plan are set in place.	The continuous school improvement plan is implemented through effective procedures in all areas of the school. Everyone commits to implementing the plan aligned to the vision, mission, and values and beliefs. All share responsibility for accomplishing school goals.	Schoolwide goals, mission, vision, and student learning standards are shared and articulated throughout the school and with feeder schools. The attainment of identified student learning standards is linked to planning and implementation of effective instruction and assessments that meet students' needs. Leaders at all levels are developing expertise because planning is the norm.
Outcome	There is no evidence of comprehensive planning. Staff work is carried out in isolation. A continuum of learning for students is absent.	The school community understands the benefits of working together to implement a comprehensive continuous school improvement plan. Current improvements are neither systematic nor integrated schoolwide.	There is evidence that the continuous school improvement plan is being implemented in some areas of the school. Schoolwide improvements are starting to show.	A continuous school improvement plan to implement the vision is known to all. Results from working toward the quality improvement goals are evident throughout the school. Planning is ongoing and inclusive of all stakeholders.	Evidence of effective teaching and learning results in significant improvement of student achievement attributed to continuous school improvement planning at all levels of the school organization. Teachers and administrators understand and share the school mission and vision. Quality planning is seamless and all demonstrate evidence of accountability.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

LEADERSHIP

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Principal as decision maker. Decisions are reactive to state, district, and federal mandates. There is no knowledge of continuous school improvement.	A shared decision-making structure is put into place and discussions begin on how to achieve a school vision. Most decisions are focused on solving problems and are reactive.	Leadership teams are created and committed to continuous school improvement. Leadership seeks inclusion of all school sectors and supports teams by making time provisions for their collaboration.	Leadership teams represent a true shared decision-making structure. All teams understand their roles and carry them out in the implementation of a comprehensive continuous school improvement plan.	A strong continuous school improvement structure is set into place that allows for input from all sectors of the school, district, and community, ensuring strong communication, flexibility, and refinement of approaches and beliefs. The school vision is student-learning focused, based on data, and appropriate for school/ community values, and meeting <i>all</i> student needs.
Implementation	Principal makes all decisions, with little or no input from teachers, the community, or students. Leadership inspects for mistakes.	The shared decision-making structure is implemented in some places and not others. Structure is mostly used to solve problems or close gaps.	School values and beliefs are identified; the purpose of school is defined; a school mission, vision, and student learning standards are agreed upon. A leadership structure for implementing approaches to achieving student learning standards and the shared vision is established.	Decisions about budget and implementation of the vision are made within teams, by the principal, by the leadership team, and by the full staff as appropriate. All decisions are communicated to the full staff.	The vision is implemented and articulated across all grade levels and into feeder schools. Quality standards are reinforced throughout the school. All members of the school community understand and apply the quality standards. Leadership team has systematic interactions and involvement with district administrators, teachers, parents, community, and students about the school's direction. Necessary resources are available to implement and measure staff learning related to student learning standards.
Outcome	Decision-making process is clear and known; however, decisions lack focus and consistency. There is no evidence of staff commitment to a shared vision. Students and parents do not feel they are being heard.	Quality leadership techniques are used sporadically. Critical areas for improvement are identified.	The mission provides a focus for all school improvement, and guides the action to the vision. The school community is committed to continuous school improvement. Faculty feel included in shared decision making.	There is evidence that the leadership team listens to all levels of the organization. Implementation of the continuous school improvement plan is linked to student learning standards and the shared vision. Leadership capacities for implementing the vision among teachers are evident.	Site-based management and shared decision making truly exists. Teachers understand and display an intimate knowledge of how the school operates. Teachers support and communicate with each other in the implementation of quality strategies. Teachers implement the vision in their classrooms and can determine how their new approach meets student needs and leads to the attainment of student learning standards. Leaders are standards-driven at all levels. Instructional coherence results.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no professional learning. Teachers, principals, and staff are seen as interchangeable parts that can be replaced. Professional learning is external and usually equated to attending a conference alone. Hierarchy determines “haves” and “have-nots.”	The “cafeteria” approach to professional learning is used, whereby individual teachers choose what they want to take, without regard to an overall school plan, or vision.	The shared vision, school plan, and student needs are used to target focused professional learning for all employees. Staff is inserviced on relevant instructional, assessment, and leadership strategies.	Professional learning and data are used by all teachers and are directed toward the goals of the shared vision and the continuous improvement of the school. Teachers have ongoing conversations about student achievement data. Other staff members receive training in their content areas. Systems thinking is considered in all decisions.	Leadership and staff continuously improve all aspects of the learning organization through an innovative, data-informed, and comprehensive continuous school improvement process that prevents student failures. Effective job-embedded professional learning is ongoing for implementing the vision for student success. Teachers engage in collegial coaching and action research focused on student learning standards. Policies set professional learning as a priority budget line-item. Professional learning is planned, aligned, and leads to the achievement of student learning standards and the shared vision.
Implementation	Teacher, principal, and staff performance is controlled and inspected. Performance evaluations are used to detect mistakes.	Teacher professional learning is sporadic and unfocused, lacking an approach for implementing new procedures and processes. Some collaborative training begins to take place.	Teachers are involved in year-round quality professional learning. The school community is trained in shared decision making, team building concepts, effective communication protocols, and data analysis at the classroom level.	Teachers, in teams, continuously set and implement student achievement goals. Leadership considers these goals and provides necessary support structures for collaboration. Teachers utilize effective support approaches as they implement new instruction and assessment strategies. Coaching and feedback structures are in place. Use of new knowledge and skills is evident.	Teams passionately support each other in the pursuit of quality improvement at all levels. Teachers make bold changes in instruction and assessment strategies focused on student learning standards and student learning styles. Staffwide conversations focus on systemic reflection and improvement. Teachers are strong leaders.
Outcome	No professional growth and no staff or student performance improvement. There exists a high turnover rate of employees, especially administrators. Attitudes and approaches filter down to students.	The effectiveness of professional learning is not known or analyzed. Teachers feel helpless about making schoolwide changes.	Teachers, working in teams, feel supported and begin to feel they can make changes. Evidence shows that collaboration to improve student learning works.	A collegial school is evident. Effective classroom strategies are practiced, articulated schoolwide, are reflective of professional learning aimed at ensuring student achievement, and the implementation of the shared vision, that includes student learning standards.	True systemic change and improved student achievement result because teachers are knowledgeable of and implement effective, differentiated teaching strategies for individual student learning gains. Teachers’ repertoire of skills are enhanced, and students are achieving. Professional learning is driving learning at all levels.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no system for input from parents, business, or community. Status quo is desired for managing the school.	Partnerships are sought, but mostly for money and things.	School has knowledge of why partnerships are important and seeks to include businesses and parents in a strategic fashion related to student learning standards for increased student learning.	School seeks effective win-win business and community partnerships and parent involvement to implement the vision. Desired outcomes are clearly identified. A solid plan for partnership development exists.	Community, parent, and business partnerships become integrated across all student groupings. The benefits of outside involvement are known by all. Parent and business involvement in student learning is refined. Student learning <i>regularly</i> takes place beyond the school walls.
Implementation	Barriers are erected to close out involvement of outsiders. Outsiders are managed for least impact on status quo.	A team is assigned to get partners and to receive input from parents, the community, and business in the school.	Involvement of business, community, and parents begins to take place in some classrooms and after school hours related to the vision. Partners begin to realize how they can support each other in achieving school goals. School staff understand what partners need from the partnership.	There is a systematic utilization of parents, community, and businesses schoolwide. Areas in which the active use of these partnerships benefit student learning are clear.	Partnership development is articulated across all student groupings. Parents, community, business, and educators work together in an innovative fashion to increase student learning and to prepare students for college and careers in the 21 st Century. Partnerships are evaluated for continuous improvement.
Outcome	There is little or no involvement of parents, business, or community at-large. School is a closed, isolated system.	Much effort is given to establishing partnerships. Some spotty trends emerge, such as receiving donated equipment.	Some substantial gains are achieved in implementing partnerships. Some student achievement increases can be attributed to this involvement.	Gains in student satisfaction with learning and school are clearly related to partnerships. All partners benefit.	Previously non-achieving students enjoy learning with excellent achievement. Community, business, and home become common places for student learning, while school becomes a place where parents come for further education. Partnerships enhance what the school does for students.

Continuous Improvement Continuums for Schools

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Neither goals nor strategies exist for the evaluation and continuous improvement of the school organization or for elements of the school organization.	The approach to continuous improvement and evaluation is problem solving. If there are no problems, or if solutions can be made quickly, there is no need for improvement or analyses. Changes in parts of the system are not coordinated with all other parts.	Some elements of the school organization are evaluated for effectiveness. Some elements are improved on the basis of the evaluation findings.	All elements of the school's operations are evaluated for improvement and to ensure congruence of the elements with respect to the continuum of learning students experience.	All aspects of the school organization are rigorously evaluated and improved on a continuous basis. Students, and the maintenance of a comprehensive learning continuum for students, become the focus of all aspects of the school improvement process.
Implementation	With no overall plan for evaluation and continuous improvement, strategies are changed by individual teachers and administrators only when something sparks the need to improve. Reactive decisions and activities are a daily mode of operation.	Isolated changes are made in some areas of the school organization in response to problem incidents. Changes are not preceded by comprehensive analyses, such as an understanding of the contributing causes of problems. The effectiveness of the elements of the school organization, or changes made to the elements, is not known.	Elements of the school organization are improved on the basis of comprehensive analyses of contributing causes of problems, client perceptions, and operational effectiveness of processes.	Continuous improvement analyses of student achievement and instructional strategies are rigorously reinforced within each classroom and across learning levels to develop a comprehensive learning continuum for students and to prevent student failure.	Comprehensive continuous improvement becomes the way of doing business at the school. Teachers continuously improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of instructional strategies based on student feedback and performance. All aspects of the school organization are improved to support teachers' efforts.
Outcome	Individuals struggle with system failure. Finger pointing and blaming others for failure occurs. The effectiveness of strategies is not known. Mistakes are repeated.	Problems are solved only temporarily and few positive changes result. Additionally, unintended and undesirable consequences often appear in other parts of the system. Many aspects of the school are incongruent, keeping the school from reaching its vision.	Evidence of effective improvement strategies is observable. Positive changes are made and maintained due to comprehensive data and process analyses and evaluation.	Teachers become astute at assessing and in predicting the impact of their instructional strategies on individual student achievement. Sustainable improvements in student achievement are evident at all grade levels, due to continuous improvement.	The school becomes a congruent and effective learning organization. Only instruction and assessment strategies that produce quality student achievement are used. A true continuum of learning results for all students and staff. The impact of improvements is increasingly measurable.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Data or information about student/school performance and needs are not gathered in any systematic way. The special education unit does not provide assistance in helping member schools understand what needs to change, based on data at the school and classroom levels, to serve students with disabilities.	There is no systematic process for data analysis across the unit. Some unit, district, school, teacher, and student information are collected and used to problem solve and establish student learning standards across the unit.	Special education unit collects data related to unit, district, school, and student performance (e.g., attendance, enrollment, achievement), and surveys students, staff, and parents. The information is used to drive the strategic quality plan for unit, district, and school improvement related to special education services.	There is systematic reliance on hard data (including data for subgroups) as a basis for decision making at the unit, district, school, and classroom levels. Changes are based on the study of data to meet the educational needs of students and teachers.	Information is gathered in all areas of student interaction with school. The special education unit engages administrators and teachers in gathering information on their own performance. Accessible to all districts and schools, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of special education service quality.
Implementation	No information is gathered with which to make unit, district, school, or classroom changes. Student and parent dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.	Some data are tracked, such as attendance, enrollment, and drop-out rates. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about special education unit services. Student and parent dissatisfaction with the learning process is seen as a need for improvement.	The special education unit collects information on current and former students (e.g., demographics, student achievement, and perceptions), analyzes and uses it for planning in conjunction with future trends. Identified areas for improvement are tracked over time.	Data are used to provide feedback to improve the effectiveness of teaching strategies for all students with disabilities. Students' historical performances are graphed of each school and utilized for analysis by the special education unit.	Innovative teaching processes that meet the needs of students with disabilities are implemented across the special education unit. Information is analyzed and used to prevent student failure. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.
Outcome	Problems are solved individually with short-term results. Only anecdotal and hypothetical information are available about the performance of students with disabilities, behavior, and satisfaction.	Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the special education unit and dependent upon individual staff members and their efforts.	Information collected about unit needs, effective assessment, and instructional practices is shared with all staff and is used to plan for improvement. Information helps staff understand pressing issues, analyze information for "root causes," and track results for improvement.	An information system is in place. Positive trends begin to appear unit-wide. There is evidence that these results are caused by understanding and effectively using the data collected.	Unit is satisfied with its instructional processes and proud of its own capabilities to learn and assess growth. Good to excellent achievement is the result. Unit uses data to predict and prevent potential problems. No student falls through the cracks.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Instructional and organizational processes critical to the success of students with disabilities are not identified. Little distinction of student learning differences is made. Some staff believe that not all students can achieve.	Some data are collected on student background and performance trends. Learning gaps are noted to direct improvement of instruction. It is known that student learning standards must be identified.	Student learning standards are identified, and a continuum of learning is created across the special education unit. Student performance data are collected and compared to the standards in order to analyze how to improve learning for all students with disabilities.	Data on student achievement are used throughout the unit to pursue the improvement of student learning. The unit ensures that all teachers collaborate to implement appropriate instruction and assessment strategies for meeting student learning standards articulated across grade levels. All teachers believe that all students can learn.	The unit makes sure that teachers are able to predict characteristics impacting the achievement of students with varying disabilities. Teachers adjust instruction accordingly. Innovative instructional changes are made to anticipate learning needs and improve student achievement.
Implementation	All students are taught the same way. There is no communication between the unit and schools about students' academic needs or learning styles. There are no analyses of how to improve instruction for students with disabilities.	Some effort is made to track and analyze student achievement trends on a unit-wide basis. The special education unit begins to understand the needs and learning gaps within each of the unit schools.	All teachers across the unit study effective instruction and assessment strategies to implement standards and to increase learning for students with disabilities. Student feedback and analysis of disaggregated achievement data are used in conjunction with implementation support strategies.	There is a systematic focus on implementing student learning standards and on the improvement of student learning unit-wide. Effective instruction and assessment strategies are implemented in each school. The unit encourages teachers to support one another with collegial strategies that lead to increased achievement for students with disabilities.	All teachers correlate critical instructional and assessment strategies with objective indicators of quality student achievement. A comparative analysis of actual students' performance to student learning standards is utilized to adjust teaching strategies to ensure a progression of learning for all students.
Outcome	There is wide variation in student attitudes and achievement with undesirable results. There is high dissatisfaction among students with disabilities with regard to learning. Student background is used as an excuse for low student achievement.	There is some evidence that achievement trends of students with disabilities are available to schools and are being used. There is much effort, but minimal observable results in improving the achievement of students with disabilities.	There is an increase in communication between the special education unit, parents, students with disabilities, and teachers regarding student learning. Teachers learn about effective instructional strategies that will implement the shared vision, student learning standards, and methods for meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Some gains are made in student achievement results.	Increased achievement is evident unit-wide in students with disabilities. Morale, attendance, and behavior are good for students with disabilities. Teachers converse often with each other about preventing student failure. Areas for further attention are clear.	Schools and teachers conduct self-assessments to continuously improve performance related to students with disabilities. Improvements in student achievement for students with disabilities are evident and clearly caused by teachers' and students' understandings of individual student learning standards, linked to appropriate and effective instructional and assessment strategies. Students with disabilities make average yearly progress.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

QUALITY PLANNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	No quality plan or process exists. Data are neither used nor considered important in planning.	The unit realizes the importance of a mission, vision, and one comprehensive action plan. The unit develops goals and timelines, and dollars are allocated to begin the planning process.	A comprehensive plan to achieve the unit vision is developed. Plan includes evaluation and continuous improvement.	One focused and integrated unit-wide plan for implementing a continuous improvement process is put into action. All unit efforts are focused on the implementation of this plan that represents the achievement of the vision.	A continuous improvement plan for the unit, with a focus on students, is put into place. There is excellent articulation and integration of all elements in the unit due to quality planning. Leadership ensures all elements are implemented by all appropriate parties.
Implementation	There is no knowledge of or direction for quality planning. Budget is allocated on an as-needed basis. Many plans exist.	The special education unit begins continuous improvement planning efforts by laying out major steps to a shared vision, through identifying values and beliefs, the purpose of the unit, a mission, and student learning standards.	Implementation goals, responsibilities, resources required, due dates, and timelines are spelled out. Support structures for implementing the plan are set in place.	The quality management plan is implemented through effective procedures in all areas of the unit. Everyone commits to implementing the plan aligned to the vision, mission, and values and beliefs. All share responsibility for accomplishing unit goals.	Unit-wide goals, mission, vision, and student learning standards are shared and articulated throughout the unit. The attainment of identified student learning standards is linked to the planning for and implementation of effective instruction that meets all students' needs. Leaders at all levels are developing expertise because planning is the norm.
Outcome	There is no evidence of comprehensive planning. Staff work is carried out in isolation. A continuum of learning for students is absent.	The unit understands the benefits of working together with all stakeholders to implement a comprehensive continuous improvement plan.	There is evidence that the special education plan is being implemented in some areas of the unit. Improvements are neither systematic nor integrated unit-wide.	A unit-wide plan is known to all. Results from working toward the quality improvement goals are evident throughout the unit. Planning is ongoing and inclusive of all stakeholders.	Evidence of effective teaching and learning results in the significant achievement of all students and can be attributed to quality planning at all levels of the unit organization. All teachers and administrators understand and share the unit mission and vision. Quality planning is seamless and evidence of accountability is demonstrated by all.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	The unit assumes no responsibility for providing professional learning for school and/or unit staff. Hierarchy determines “haves” and “have-nots.”	The “cafeteria” approach to professional learning is used, whereby individual staff members choose what they want to take, without regard to an overall district/ special education unit plan.	The shared vision, district/special education unit plan, and needs of students with disabilities are used to target focused professional learning for all staff. Staff is trained on relevant instructional and leadership strategies.	Professional learning and data-gathering methods are used by all district/special education staff, and are directed toward the goals of the shared vision and the continuous improvement of the district/unit and schools. Teachers have ongoing conversations about student achievement data. All staff members receive training in teaching students with disabilities. Systems thinking is considered in all decisions.	Leadership and staff continuously improve all aspects of the learning organization through an innovative, data-driven, and comprehensive continuous improvement process that prevents student failures. Effective job-embedded professional learning is ongoing for implementing the vision for student success. Traditional teacher evaluations are replaced by collegial coaching and action research focused on student learning standards. Policies set professional learning as a priority budget line-item. Professional learning is planned, aligned, and leads to the achievement of student learning standards for all students.
Implementation	District/unit staff performance is controlled and inspected. Performance evaluations are used to detect mistakes.	District/unit staff professional learning is sporadic and unfocused, lacking an approach for implementing new procedures and processes. Some leadership training begins to take place.	The district/unit ensures that staff is involved in year-round quality professional learning. Stakeholders are trained in shared decision making, team building concepts, effective communication strategies, and data analysis.	District/unit staff, in teams, continuously set and implement student achievement goals. Leadership considers these goals and provides necessary support structures for collaboration. District/unit staff utilize effective support approaches as they implement new instruction and assessment strategies, particularly for students with disabilities. Coaching and feedback structures are in place. Use of new knowledge and skills is evident.	General education and special education teachers support each other in the pursuit of quality improvement at all levels. Teachers make bold changes in instruction and assessment strategies focused on student learning standards and student learning styles. A teacher as action researcher model is implemented. Staffwide conversations focus on systemic reflection and improvement. Teachers are strong leaders.
Outcome	No professional growth and no staff or student performance improvement exists. There is a high turnover rate of staff. Attitudes and approaches filter down to students.	The effectiveness of professional learning is not known or analyzed. Teachers feel helpless and unsupported in making unit-wide changes.	Teachers, working in teams, feel supported by the district/unit and begin to feel they can make changes. Evidence shows that shared decision making works.	A collegial relationship between the special education unit and its member schools is evident. Effective classroom strategies are practiced and articulated unit-wide. These strategies, focused on student learning standards, are reflective of professional learning aimed at ensuring the learning of students with disabilities and the implementation of the shared vision.	True systemic change and improved achievement of students with disabilities occur because all teachers are knowledgeable of and implement effective, differentiated teaching strategies for individual student learning gains. All teachers’ repertoire of skills is enhanced and students are achieving. General education and special education professional learning is unified and is driving learning at all levels.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

LEADERSHIP

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	<p>The Unit Director is decision maker. Decisions are reactive to state, district, and federal mandates. There is no knowledge of continuous improvement.</p>	<p>A shared decision-making structure is put into place and discussions begin on how to achieve a unit vision. Most decisions are focused on solving problems and are reactive.</p>	<p>Unit leadership is committed to continuous improvement. Leadership seeks inclusion of all stakeholders and supports topical study teams by making time provisions for their work.</p>	<p>Unit leadership represents a true shared decision-making structure. Study teams focus on the implementation of a comprehensive continuous improvement plan.</p>	<p>A strong continuous improvement structure is set into place that allows for input from all sectors of the school, district, and community, ensuring strong communication, flexibility, and refinement of approach and beliefs. The district/unit vision is student focused, based on data and appropriate for district/unit/school/ community values, and meeting student needs.</p>
Implementation	<p>The Unit Director makes all decisions, with little or no input from staff, administrators, teachers, the community, or students. Leadership inspects for mistakes.</p>	<p>District/unit values and beliefs are identified; the purpose of unit is defined; a unit mission is developed with representative input. A structure for studying approaches to achieving student learning standards for students with disabilities is established.</p>	<p>The district/unit leadership is active on study teams and integrates recommendations from the teams' research and analyses to form a comprehensive plan for continuous improvement within the context of the district/unit mission. Everyone is kept informed.</p>	<p>Decisions about budget and implementation of the vision are made with input from teams, the director, from leadership, from the individual schools, and from the full staff, as appropriate. All decisions are communicated to leadership and all staff.</p>	<p>The vision is implemented and articulated across all member districts and into feeder schools. Quality standards are reinforced throughout the unit. All members of the district/unit understand and apply the quality standards. Leadership has systematic interactions and involvement with district/ unit administrators, teachers, parents, community, and students about the unit's direction. Necessary resources are available to implement and measure staff learning related to student learning standards.</p>
Outcome	<p>Although the decision-making process is clearly known, decisions are reactive and lack focus and consistency. There is no evidence of staff commitment to a shared vision. Students and parents do not believe they are being heard.</p>	<p>The mission provides a focus for all unit improvement and guides the action to the vision. The special education unit is committed to continuous improvement. Quality leadership techniques are used sporadically.</p>	<p>The unit leadership is seen as committed to planning and quality improvement. Critical areas for improvement are identified. Staff is included in shared decision making. The special education unit begins working with member districts to unify continuous improvement plans.</p>	<p>There is evidence that the unit leadership listens to all levels of the organization. Implementation of the continuous improvement plan is linked to student learning standards and the guiding principles of the unit. Leadership capacity for implementing the vision among schools is evident. The special education unit and most member districts are committed to continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Site-based management and shared decision making truly exists. Teachers understand and display an intimate knowledge of how the district/unit operates. The unit and its member schools support and communicate with each other in the implementation of quality strategies, as outlined in unified continuous improvement plans. Teachers implement the vision in their classrooms and can determine how their new approaches meet all student needs and lead to the attainment of student learning standards. Leaders are standards-driven at all levels.</p>

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	There is no system for input from parents, agencies, or community. Status quo is desired for managing the special education unit.	Partnerships are sought, but mostly for money and things.	The unit has knowledge of why partnerships are important and seeks to include agencies and parents in a strategic fashion related to student learning standards for increased student achievement.	The unit seeks effective win-win partnerships with businesses, agencies, and the community, and meaningful parent involvement to implement the vision. Desired outcomes are clearly identified. A solid plan for partnership development exists.	Community, parent, business, and agency partnerships become integrated across all student groupings. The benefits of outside involvement are known by all. Parent and agency involvement in student learning is refined. Student learning <i>regularly</i> takes place beyond the school and district walls.
Implementation	Barriers are erected to close out involvement of outsiders and to preserve the status quo.	A team is assigned to develop partnerships and to receive input from parents, agencies, the community, and businesses in the unit.	Involvement of agencies, community, businesses, and parents begins to take place in some classrooms and after school hours related to the vision. Partners begin to realize how they can support each other in achieving unit goals. Unit staff members understand what partners need from the partnership.	There is systematic utilization of parents, community, businesses, and agencies unit-wide. Areas in which the active use of these partnerships benefit student learning are clear.	Partnership development is articulated across all student groupings. Parents, community, agencies, businesses, and educators work together in an innovative fashion to increase learning and to prepare all students for the future. Partnerships are evaluated for continuous improvement.
Outcome	There is little or no involvement of parents, agencies, or the community at-large. The unit is a closed, isolated system.	Much effort is given to establishing partnerships. Some spotty trends emerge, such as receiving donated equipment.	Some substantial gains are achieved in implementing partnerships. Some student achievement increases can be attributed to this involvement.	Gains in student satisfaction with learning and school are clearly related to partnerships. All partners benefit.	Previously non-achieving students enjoy learning with excellent achievement. The community, agencies, businesses, and home become common places for student learning, while school becomes a place where parents come for further education. Partnerships enhance what the unit does for students.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Continuums

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Approach	Neither goals nor strategies exist for the evaluation and continuous improvement of the special education unit.	The approach to continuous improvement and evaluation is problem solving. If there are no problems, or if solutions can be made quickly, there is no need for improvement or analysis. Changes in some aspects of the system are not coordinated with all other aspects.	Some aspects of the unit are evaluated for effectiveness. Some aspects are improved on the basis of the evaluation findings.	All aspects of the unit's operations are evaluated for improvement. Efforts are consistently made to ensure that every aspect of the unit is focused on student learning.	All aspects of the unit organization are rigorously evaluated and improved on a continuous basis. Students, and the maintenance of a comprehensive learning continuum for students, become the focus of all aspects of the unified special education unit/district improvement process.
Implementation	With no overall plan for evaluation and continuous improvement, strategies are changed by individual schools, teachers, and/or administrators only when something sparks the need to improve. Reactive decisions and activities are a daily mode of operation.	Isolated changes are made in some areas of the unit in response to problem incidents. Changes are not preceded by comprehensive analyses, such as an understanding of the root causes of problems. The effectiveness of the aspects of the special education unit is not known.	Aspects of the unit organization are improved on the basis of comprehensive analyses of root causes of challenges, stakeholder perceptions, and operational effectiveness of processes.	Continuous improvement analyses of student achievement and instructional strategies are rigorously reinforced within each classroom and across learning levels to develop a comprehensive learning continuum for students and to prevent student failure.	Unified and comprehensive continuous improvement becomes the way of doing business throughout the unit and its member districts. Teachers continuously improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of instructional strategies based on student feedback and performance. All aspects of the special education unit and member districts are improved to support teachers' efforts.
Outcome	Individuals struggle with system failure. Finger pointing and blaming others for failure occur. The effectiveness of strategies is not known. Mistakes are repeated.	Problems are solved only temporarily and few positive changes result. Additionally, unintended and undesirable consequences often appear in other parts of the system. Many aspects of the unit are incongruent, keeping the unit from reaching its vision.	Evidence of effective improvement strategies is observable. Positive changes are made and maintained due to comprehensive analyses and evaluation.	Teachers become astute at assessing and in predicting the impact of their instructional strategies on individual student achievement. Sustainable improvements in student achievement are evident at all grade levels due to continuous improvement supported by the unit.	The unit and member districts become a congruent and effective learning organization. Only instruction and assessment strategies that produce quality student achievement are used. A true continuum of learning results for all students and staff. The impact of improvements is increasingly measurable.

RtI CONTINUUMS

CURRICULUM ~ INSTRUCTION ~ ASSESSMENT ~ BEHAVIOR

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	<i>From a focus on teaching textbooks to a focus on student learning.</i>				
	Curriculum is driven primarily by teacher preference and not aligned to the state/local standards.	Curriculum is driven primarily by textbooks.	Curriculum is aligned vertically and horizontally to state/local standards. Teachers embed evidence-based teaching practices in a multi-level system of support within the integrated general education and special education curriculum.	Curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned with state/local standards. Evidence-based quality instruction is adjusted according to students' needs and their responses to instruction and interventions.	The aligned curriculum is implemented in every classroom and leads to a continuum of teaching and learning, allowing all students to meet and exceed state/local standards, and for teachers to help students prevent failure.
	<i>From just teaching to teaching with impact.</i>				
	Teaching occurs in isolation, without consideration to adjusting instruction to meet the needs of all students. All students are expected to learn in the same way. Many students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are removed from the general education setting for specialized instruction.	Students with IEPs are included in the general education setting where special educators may assist with implementation of accommodations. Some students with IEPs, who need additional instruction, learn in special education classrooms.	Staffs agree on and are committed to a shared vision regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessments across and between grade levels. Multi-level systems of support and prevention are embedded within the general education curriculum and setting. Most students with IEPs fully participate in the general education setting.	General educators and special educators develop a common understanding in reference to instruction and assessment responsibilities within collaborative structures that include a well defined multi-level system of teaching and learning.	Evidence-based teaching practices and learning strategies are implemented with integrity and fidelity to meet the needs of all students. Implementation of interventions is continually monitored and evaluated to ensure fidelity and integrity.

Note: From *Response to Intervention (RtI) and Continuous School Improvement (CSI): Using Data, Vision, and Leadership to Design, Implement, and Evaluate a Schoolwide Prevention System*, by Victoria L. Bernhardt and Connie L. Hébert, 2011, Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.

RtI CONTINUUMS

CURRICULUM ~ INSTRUCTION ~ ASSESSMENT ~ BEHAVIOR

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
	<i>From assessment of learning to assessment for learning.</i>				
	Assessments are given at the end of units or when the teacher feels so inclined.	Assessments, usually aligned to textbooks, may include informal as well as formal approaches. Some results are used by some staff to inform and design instruction.	Common formative assessments, aligned to the standards, are used to monitor student learning in every subject area, and to adjust and improve instruction so all students can become proficient.	Common formative assessments inform curricular and standards alignment. Common formative assessments are used with ongoing progress monitoring to assign students to intervention groups and ensure each student's success.	All student outcome data are openly discussed and analyzed. These data are used to make instructional decisions. Students who receive additional instructional support receive ongoing monitoring of progress using curriculum-based measures.
	<i>From responding to behavior to developing behavioral competence.</i>				
	Behavioral issues are addressed via office referrals. There is no differentiation of disciplinary action or intervention.	Some teachers have proactive approaches to discipline. Behavioral interventions are sometimes used in addition to, or in place of, traditional disciplinary action. Most behavior issues are referred to the office.	Behavioral issues are viewed primarily as instructional issues. Staffs agree on how behavior should be handled within a multi-level preventive system. Severe incidents are dealt with by the office.	The multi-level prevention system includes targeted, evidence-based behavioral interventions. Expectations and strategies are taught consistently for students to improve their own behavior to support learning.	Social and behavioral expectations are clearly defined, agreed upon, monitored, and enforced. Students demonstrate social and behavioral competence. Behavior issues do not exist, only instructional concerns.

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RtI CONTINUUMS

COLLABORATION

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	<i>From teaching in isolation to learning communities.</i>				
	Teaching occurs in isolation. “Yours” and “mine” mentality exists regarding students identified with special needs. Learning problems are based on opinion rather than data.	Teachers independently engage in problem solving to design interventions for at-risk students. General educators and special educators may share information regarding accommodations for students either as they are being considered for evaluation or based on expectations outlined in IEPs.	Staffs are committed to a shared vision that includes collaborative structures to implement the vision. Collaboration includes structures such as formal teams, peer coaching, protected meeting and planning times.	All teachers collaborate to implement an RtI system that includes universal screenings and common formative assessments across all subject areas including behavioral/social expectations. Collaborative decision making occurs for student assignment to intervention levels as well as for adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Collaborative structures, implemented with integrity and fidelity, allow teachers to support each other for increased student achievement and attainment of the shared vision.	All staffs are engaged in collaborative structures to ensure and maintain student success. Collaborative structures are utilized to implement a continuum of learning for all students. No student falls through the cracks. The RtI system ensures student success and identifies needed adjustments to address the unique characteristics of the learners.
	<i>From separate practices and environments to a collaborative system.</i>				
	General educators attend IEP meetings because they are required to, but are not sure how to contribute. Special educators are unclear how to include general educators in the IEP process.	Special educators may assist general educators with implementation of pre-referral strategies for students who struggle, but these are often not documented until a referral is made. When students are identified, general educators are involved in the IEP based on knowledge of the general curriculum and need for identifying accommodations.	Roles and responsibilities are defined for special education and general education and both are committed to the implementation of the shared vision. General educators participate fully in the special education process: from referral, evaluation, and eligibility determination, to IEP development, implementation, progress monitoring, annual review, and re-evaluation.	General and special education teachers agree upon and share instructional and assessment responsibilities through protected, job embedded collaborative time. Coaching and feedback support integrity and fidelity of implementation. Staffs collaborate, using common formative assessment data, to determine intervention level based on established entry and exit criteria of a multi-level prevention system.	Responsibility for steps in the special education process is blended among general and special education personnel. The process is intertwined in the RtI system, creating reliance on documentation from instructional data to help all students learn.

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RtI CONTINUUMS

REFERRAL PROCEDURES

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
	<i>From learning disabilities to learning differences.</i>				
	Students exhibiting learning and/or behavior problems are promptly referred to special education for evaluation. Referrals from parents most often lead to evaluation without additional consideration.	Classroom interventions or pre-referral strategies may occur before referral for consideration of special education evaluation; however, referrals from parents usually lead to immediate evaluation.	Teachers strive to identify at-risk students for early prevention and pre-referral strategies. Pre-referral teams monitor interventions prior to referral for consideration of special services. Referrals from parents are reviewed and may be redirected to the multi-level RtI system.	Referrals made outside of the RtI system, including referrals from parents, are directed to the appropriate team for documentation of interventions. Clear and helpful documentation procedures exist to determine intervention effectiveness. This information is used for special education referral and eligibility determinations.	Progress monitoring consistently informs staff of students' needs and their responses to interventions. From this information, teachers determine if interventions should continue or if students need to be referred for consideration of evaluation for special education services. Students with disabilities are not seen as qualitatively different from non-disabled students.
	<i>From compliance to best practices.</i>				
	Learner characteristics associated with poverty, limited English proficiency, and learning styles are mistaken for learning disabilities, resulting in a high number of students referred for special education evaluation, while the percent determined eligible is often low because no significant discrepancy exists. Referrals for special education are reviewed by administrators for processing.	Referrals are processed by the appropriate team of professionals who determine if an evaluation is needed. Pre-referral teams may assist with interventions, but there is no multi-level system of prevention for monitoring implementation and student responsiveness. The ratio of students referred for evaluation and those found eligible improves as some referrals are addressed through pre-referral strategies. The time it takes to refer a student is unnecessarily extended.	Staff discusses and uses common formative assessment data (screening, benchmark, and progress monitoring) informally to determine appropriate intervention level and referral for consideration of special education evaluation. Referrals for special education are processed by the appropriate team of professionals, and pre-referral data are considered in determining need for evaluation. RtI data are used to assist in determination of eligibility for specific learning disability or other disabilities because consistent procedures are in place.	Assignment to appropriate levels of intervention results in decreased referrals for special services. Accurate referrals for special education evaluation are made, evidenced by marginal differences in the number of referrals for consideration of evaluation, the number of students evaluated, and the number of students found eligible. Referrals made through the RtI system are increasingly accurate and accepted due to intervention integrity, fidelity, and effectiveness, as well as sufficient documentation.	RtI system is fluid between and among special and general education environments, students, and staff. Components of an RtI system, such as multi-level instruction and intervention, instructional coherence, ongoing formative assessments, including progress monitoring, and collaboration for informed decision making are embedded in daily practices and processes and have become "the way we do business."

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RtI CONTINUUMS

DATA ANALYSIS AND USE

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
	<i>From limited data collection to comprehensive schoolwide data utilization.</i>				
	Data or information about student performance and student learning needs are not collected in any systematic way.	Some teachers collect some student learning data, other than grades and state testing results. There is no specifically appointed time, designated personnel, or responsibilities for data collection and review.	Expectations regarding data collection and analysis are communicated to all staff. Student feedback, acquired through perceptions data, classroom performance, analysis of behavior, and achievement data are used to determine support strategies and interventions.	All elements of the school organization are improved on the basis of comprehensive data analyses including: analysis of contributing causes of undesirable results and analysis of process effectiveness. Roles and responsibilities include data collection, analysis, and use.	Data and information gathered, analyzed, utilized, and shared with stakeholders are accurate and comprehensive, reflecting all programs and processes in the school. Time and personnel are designated and protected for continually monitoring schoolwide data.
	<i>From reactive problem solving to proactive decision making.</i>				
	Data are not used to determine what needs to change at the school or classroom levels. Problems are solved reactively with short-term results.	Change is limited to areas of the school where individual teachers see a need, with decisions being made one student or group at a time. Schools analyze or review little data other than annual performance data, and this is to identify lowest performing students, to provide tutoring to the “bubble kids,” or to look at specific areas of weakness of all students.	Schoolwide data are used to assess instructional coherence and to determine areas for improvement. Staff discuss and use assessment data informally for determining flexible groups and assigning students to intervention groups. Progress monitoring of student performance is part of intervention implementation, and is used to make decisions regarding intervention effectiveness, and the need for referral for consideration for special education evaluation.	Student performance data are available and accessible for staff in a meaningful format for interpretation, discussion, and decision making in all academic and behavioral/social areas. Continuous analysis of student achievement and instructional strategies are rigorously reinforced within each classroom and across learning levels to ensure a continuum of learning for students and to prevent student failure.	Data inform decisions and include multiple measures to ensure all aspects of the school organization are improved to support teachers’ efforts and students’ success. Information is analyzed and used to assist with identification and implementation of strategies matched to student need, to prevent student failure, to predict student success, and to address system congruence.

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RtI CONTINUUMS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	<i>From professional development events to professional learning experiences.</i>				
	<p>Professional development for general and special educators is held separately as the same topics are not perceived as relevant to both groups. Outcomes for professional development are not measured.</p>	<p>Teachers seek professional development, including book studies, for personal professional growth or topics that apply to their students or school. Professional development is evaluated by assessing participants' views of presenter's knowledge, skills, and relevance of content to them.</p>	<p>Professional development includes staffwide professional learning, shared learning experiences, shared readings, and peer coaching and feedback structures to support integrity and fidelity of implementation strategies. Professional development and learning is monitored and evaluated for implementation, and includes content related to implementing the schoolwide vision and its multi-level prevention system.</p>	<p>Professional learning includes job-embedded structures, allowing teachers to have ongoing conversations about student learning data and to acquire training to teach students based on the demographic and learning profile of the school. Professional learning is linked with the shared vision, comprehensive data analysis, and contributing cause analyses. Professional learning is evaluated to determine follow-through and to inform future needs.</p>	<p>Effective job-embedded professional learning, based on the evaluation of staff and student needs, leads to the achievement of student learning standards, and helps all staff implement the vision and RtI system. Varied and targeted collaborative professional learning opportunities exist. The professional learning strategies focus on implementing strategies that lead to increased student achievement at each instructional and intervention level.</p>

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RtI CONTINUUMS

LEADERSHIP

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)	<i>From management to leadership.</i>				
	<p>Decisions are reactive to requirements with little knowledge of continuous improvement. Administrators serve as evaluators of personnel and programs with limited input from staff, parents, students, or other data sources. Responsibilities for scheduling professional development, curriculum selection or development, and other decisions are made by administration.</p>	<p>Administrators are supportive of efforts to improve, such as teaming and collaboration. Staff discussions guide decision-making; however, improvement efforts are focused on solving individual problems. Data are analyzed by the administrator; results are shared with teachers, and directives are given for improvement.</p>	<p>All staff, including administration, engage in professional learning. Leadership teams are established to inform decisions and to implement the vision. Roles and responsibilities of all staff members and leadership teams are identified. The shared vision and expectations are implemented by all.</p>	<p>Leadership participates in proactive, data informed, and preventive decision making. Administration and teaching staff are informed regarding evidence-based practices and share professional learning experiences. Time and resources are allocated and protected for instruction, collaboration, planning, and interventions, which are implemented with integrity and fidelity.</p>	<p>The vision is vigorously supported and implemented with consistent communication regarding implementation expectations and outcomes. Leadership protects and honors allocated time and resources for collaboration, professional learning, and interventions. Comprehensive data analysis informs decisions and allows leadership to accurately predict the professional needs of colleagues for continuous improvement and the achievement of student learning standards.</p>

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