



Indicator: The school reports and documents its progress monthly to the superintendent, and the superintendent reports the school's progress to the school board. (28)

Explanation: A good school improvement process and system will provide for convenient, typically electronic, reporting of progress. This report may be standardized for all schools, with the principal submitting it monthly to the superintendent for inclusion in the board report. Progress with student outcomes may not, in many cases, be computed so frequently, but it should be added to the report when available (quarterly benchmarks, for example). Building board understanding and support for continuous improvement processes in the schools is essential.

Questions: Does your district provide principals with a standard format for submitting monthly summaries of the school's improvement process? How does your superintendent share this information with the school board?

An increasingly robust research base demonstrates the critical role school districts can play in school improvement and in schools' efforts to meet standards. A key element is strong leadership by a superintendent and school board willing and able to publicly recognize challenges, develop a plan for reform, and build support for needed changes. Both equity and excellence must be addressed, with the focus of reform efforts clearly centered on instruction. Districts must take the lead in establishing "no excuses" goals and in developing initiatives designed to move all schools toward these. However, it also must be clear that accountability for carrying out these initiatives – and for ensuring every student learns – is in the hands of principals and teachers. To support them and to ensure improvement efforts stay on track, districts should remain actively engaged through efforts such as creation of a curricular focus, intensive development opportunities for staff, monitoring of progress, and provision of resources needed to address intervention needs of individual students.

The message from studies of high-performing districts discussed here is clear: Systemic district-based efforts can effectively support improvement across schools. The principles discussed here also have special relevance for district efforts to turn around low-performing schools. Clearly, even major school-based restructuring and turnaround efforts are likely to be more successful in the context of an effective district.

Strong superintendent leadership, supported by a knowledgeable and collaborative school board, is key to such reform efforts. The press to reach high levels of achievement must begin with the development and communication of goals focused on high student achievement. It must also be clear that personal accountability for results is an expectation across the system, with standards, ways to monitor, and consequences in place.

Source: Gordon Cawelti & Nancy Protheroe, In Walberg, *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*. Retrieved from www.adi.org. See Download ADI Publications.

References and Resources

Cawelti, G., & Protheroe, N. (2007). The school board and central office in school improvement. In H. Walberg (Ed.), *Handbook*

on restructuring and substantial school improvement (pp. 37–52). Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement. Retrieved from www.adi.org. See Download ADI Publications.

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