



Indicator: District and school decision makers meet at least twice a month to discuss the school's progress. (30)

Explanation: If the district has designated a “district liaison” to the school, this meeting may be between the liaison and the school’s Leadership Team or the liaison and the principal. Less frequent meetings may include the superintendent and other district personnel. Large meetings of all (or many) principals do not accomplish the same result. Attention should be paid to each school’s specific improvement progress.

Questions: Does your district provide a regular venue for meeting with school leaders to review and discuss each school’s improvement progress?

Communication is a key factor in every enterprise. Failure to communicate is always a factor in a failed project. Good communication is apparent in a successful project. For districts that have schools in improvement, communication is a key ingredient to keep everyone aware of the goals, roles, and expectations and keeps everyone accountable for the part they plan in improvement:

As external pressure to raise school performance rises, there is an urgent need for the district leadership, schools, and key civic and policy stakeholders to communicate and coordinate on their decisions on governance, finance, curriculum, professional development, and management....The district...office...needs to facilitate links and keep lines of communication open between the schools and the district, thereby maintaining the balance between support and pressure. (Wong, 2007)

The relationship between a district and a school should always include scheduled and regular meetings with school leadership to ensure progress toward the goals and vision of the district. However, when a school is in improvement, “the relationship of the district with a low-performing school should be different – tighter – from that with other schools. The low-performing school will require more attention from central office staff to provide support and monitor school efforts” (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2007, p. 45-50). Districts may consider holding meetings for all their school leadership to attend and then schedule additional meeting times with individual leaders of schools in improvement status. The frequency of the meetings communicates to the school the seriousness and urgency of the situation, the district’s support of the change process, and the district’s commitment to seeing real and lasting change in its schools.

Cawelti and Protheroe (2007) also state that

School staff cannot be expected to engage in improvement efforts that may substantially change their daily work lives without support. Helping staff members, especially teachers, acquire needed skills creates an important spiral effect. They are better able to fill their newly defined roles—and with success comes increased confidence and willingness to move outside a close-door model toward increased participation in school- and

district-level improvement efforts. To do this, districts will likely find they need to shift central office staff responsibilities from oversight to providing much needed expertise directly to schools. (p. 49)

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.

Walberg, H. (Ed.) (2007). *Handbook on restructuring and substantial school improvement*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation & Improvement. Retrieved from www.adi.org. See Download ADI Publications.

Wong, K. K. (2007). District-wide framework for improvement. In H. Walberg (Ed.), *Handbook on restructuring and substantial school improvement* (pp. 23–35). Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation and Improvement. Retrieved from www.adi.org. See Download ADI Publications.

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