
Operations Manual

Illinois State Board of Education

Statewide System of Support

Building Local Capacity

WORKING DRAFT
October 2011

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Mission and Goals of the Illinois State Board of Education for the Statewide System of Support

The Statewide System of Support's Mission

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in partnership with the Statewide System of Support (SSOS), assists all districts and schools in their continuous improvement process—enabling all students to succeed in postsecondary education and career opportunities.

The Illinois State Board of Education's Goals:

Learning Environment

Every school will offer a safe and healthy learning environment for all students, one that promotes a set of shared ideas by improving connections, coherence, capacity, commitment, and collaboration.

Educator Quality

Highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders will support all students.

Academic Intervention

Every student will demonstrate academic achievement and receive the preparation needed for success after high school.

Purpose of the Statewide System of Support

The purpose of the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is to supply a comprehensive continuum of research-based support services and resources designed to improve student outcomes for all Illinois districts and schools.

One component of the system of support is the state's regional service delivery system, which consists of 44 Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and three Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs). The 44 ROEs serve 101 of Illinois's 102 counties and the three ISCs serve the densely populated suburban region of Cook County. This regional delivery system fashioned 10 Area Support Providers (ASPs) that allow for the focus of additional resources and expertise specific to schools and districts failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 known popularly as No Child Left Behind. Of those 10 Area Support Providers, six cover the geographical areas of multiple ROEs, three align to the three ISCs, and the remaining one provides support solely to the City of Chicago School District 299 and its schools.

At this writing, through the ROEs, ISCs, and 10 ASPs, more than 200 coaches and school improvement specialists are providing direct assistance to districts and their schools. Strong partnerships with the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) and the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) further support the current regional delivery system.

Finally, the coordination and collaboration of resources and services between the ROEs, ISCs, ASPs, IPA, and IASB allows the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and its SSOS to provide equitable, consistent, and high-quality assistance to accelerate achievement and ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for success in college and careers.

Guiding Principles to Improve the Statewide System of Support

ISBE subscribes to the following guiding principles, which act as catalysts for continuous improvement.

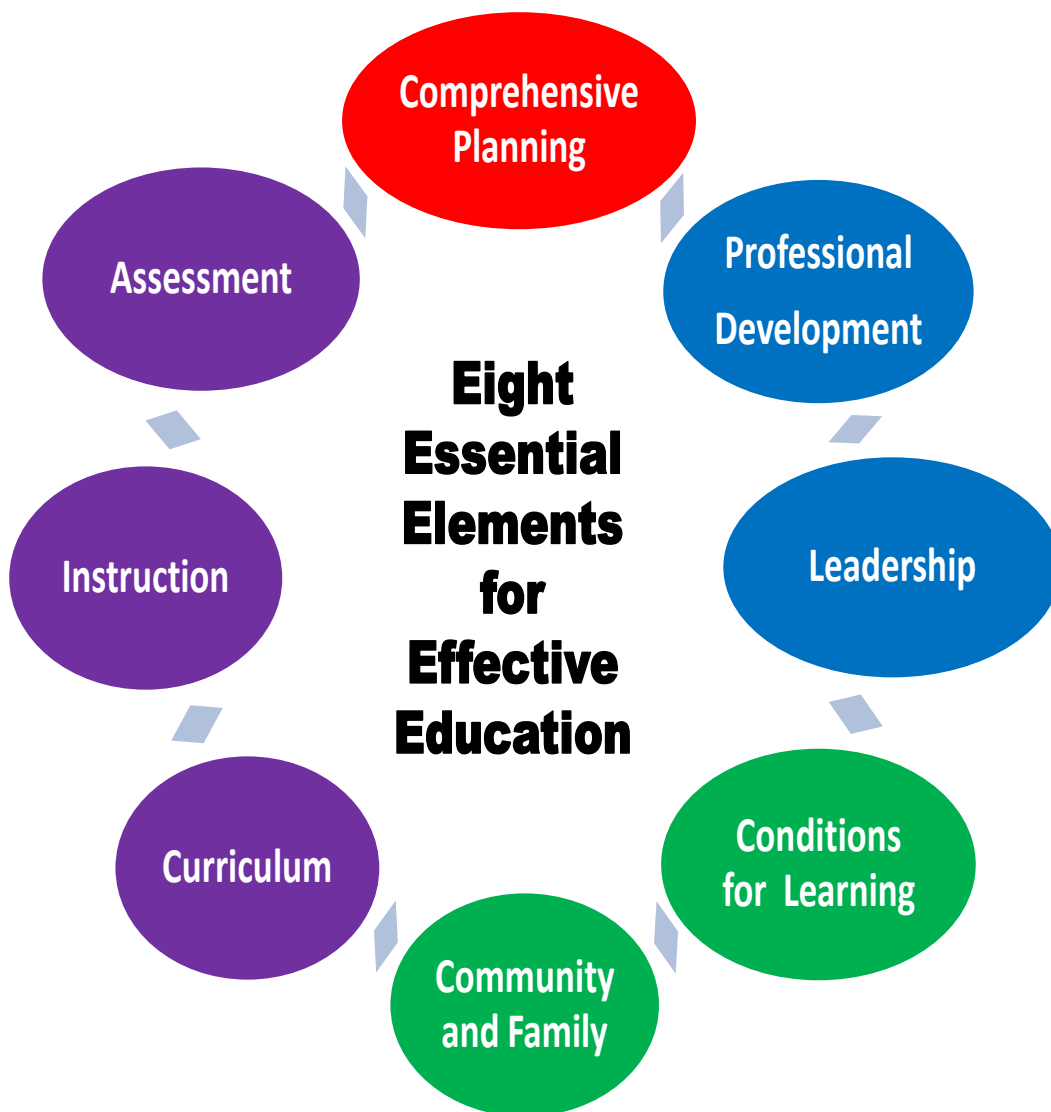
The Statewide System of Support

- Requires increased capacity that is sufficient to meet the challenges of serving an increasing number of districts and schools in need of school improvement with the intensity and fidelity necessary for comprehensive support.
- Provides an organized structure under which the divisions of Innovation and Improvement, Special Education, English Language Learning, Career and Technical Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Data Analysis and Progress Reporting (structurally separated by funding streams and departmental organization) can unify to calibrate cross-divisional school improvement efforts while maximizing the efficiency of ISBE's human capital.
- Assists in the effective coordination of resources and services from ISBE, its field staff, intermediate centers, organizational partners, distinguished mentors and educators, regional service providers, and consultants within one coherent unit.
- Serves to build the capacity of districts to assume, with confidence, greater responsibility for the continuous improvement of instruction and student achievement.
- Intentionally links systems from the state to the district, to the school, and to the classroom in order to influence variables that will accelerate student achievement.
- Assists ISBE in assessing and monitoring progress in district operations with an approved set of indicators, procedures, and instruments to provide continuous improvement, differentiated by need, for all Illinois public school districts.

Eight Essential Elements for Effective Education

ISBE believes that successful districts have as their foundation the following eight essential elements. The SSOS will assist ISBE in evaluating the presence of these essential elements within a district by using a specified set of indicators. These research-based indicators provide a common language statewide to identify gaps and measure progress for continuous improvement. Formerly unidentified and absent in the system, these elements and indicators provide substantive direction for all Illinois schools through diagnosis followed by targeted interventions to improve student achievement.

Please note that the eight essential elements are of equal importance and have no rank order.



Eight Essential Elements Mapped to Categories and Indicators

Illinois's eight essential elements for effective education, as depicted on the previous page, are

- Comprehensive Planning
- Professional Development
- Leadership
- Conditions for Learning
- Community and Family Engagement
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment

Each of the eight essential elements is mapped to one of four categories, **continuous improvement**, **educator quality**, **learning environment**, and **teaching and learning**.

Category	Essential Element
Continuous Improvement	Comprehensive Planning
Educator Quality	Professional Development Leadership
Learning Environment	Conditions for Learning Community and Family Engagement
Teaching and Learning	Curriculum Instruction Assessment

In addition, each of the eight essential elements is supported by specific indicators of effective practice. These indicators derive from research and assist in identifying visible, tangible, and behavioral evidence to measure the strength of an element's presence in a district or school.

Eight Essential Elements Mapped to Categories and Indicators

An **ss** (SmartStart), **sp** (SmartPlan) or **sr** (SmartRestructuring) denotes a required indicator to bring an improvement plan into compliance. In addition, some indicators may be **sc**=SmartCore, **rti**=Response to Intervention, **CL** or **cl**=Conditions for Learning, **ell**=English Language Learners, **sped**=Special Education and related services, and **hs**=high school.

	CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL ELEMENT	INDICATORS					
D I S T R I C T	Continuous Improvement 48 indicators	Comprehensive Planning	<u>SmartStart</u> IA07ssell IA11ssell IB01ss IB02ss IC05sssc ID01ss	<u>SmartPlan</u> IA06spsc IA08sp IA09spell IA10spcl IA12sp IA13sprtiell IA14spell IC01sp IC02sp IC06sp IC07spell IC08sp ID10sp D7spsc	IA01sc IA02sc IA03sc IA04 IA05cl CC02sc IA15 IC03 IC04 ID02 D9sc D11rti D13rti CII1 CII2 CII3 CII4 CII5			
			<u>SmartRestructuring</u> IB03sr IB04sr IB05sr IB06sr IB07sr IB08sr IB09sr IB10sr IB11sr IB12sr					
S C H O O L	Educator Quality 21 indicators	Leadership	<u>SmartStart</u> ID01ss ID06ss ID07ss ID08ss ID10ss	<u>SmartPlan</u> IE06sp IE07sp	ID02 CII7cl ID11 ID13 IE05 IE08sc IE09sc IE10			
		Professional Development	<u>SmartStart</u>	<u>SmartPlan</u> IF08sp	IF05scl CL16 IF06 IF10 CL17			
	Learning Environment 20 indicators	Conditions for Learning	<u>SmartStart</u> CL7ss	<u>SmartPlan</u>	CL1rti CL2 CL3rti CL4 CL5 CL8rti CL9 CL10 CL11 CL12			
		Community and Family Engagement	<u>SmartStart</u>	<u>SmartPlan</u> IVA03sp IVD01sp IVD02sp IVD03spsc IIIB06spscell	CF1 CL15 IE13 CL6sc			
	Teaching and Learning 63 indicators	Curriculum	<u>SmartStart</u>	<u>SmartPlan</u> IIA01spscell	IIA02 CII6			
		Instruction	<u>SmartStart</u> IIC01sssc IIIA01sssc	<u>SmartPlan</u> IIIA35sp IIC12spell IIIA06 spell IIIA07sprtiell	IIC03scell IIIA02scl IIIA05 TL2cl TL1sc IIIA08 IIIA09 IIIA10 IIIA11 IIIA13 IIIA14 IIIA15 IIIA16 TL5 IIIA17 IIIA18 IIIA19 IIIA20 IIIA21 IIIA25 IIIA26 IIIA27 IIIA28 IIIA31 IIIA32 IIIA33 IIIA40 TL9sc IIIB01 IIIB02 IIIB03 IIC01 IIC04 IIC05 IIC06 IIC08 IIC09 IIC10 CL22 CL19			
		Assessment	<u>SmartStart</u> IID04ssell IID06ss IID07sssc	<u>SmartPlan</u> IID08spscellcl	IIB01sc IIB02 IIB03sc IIB04rtiell IIB05 IID02sc IID03sc IID09scl IID10rticl IID11			

Category: Continuous Improvement

Element - Comprehensive Planning

Comprehensive planning is the process of engaging community stakeholders to:

- Collect and analyze data;
- Define district or school goals;
- Identify management structures (e.g., leadership, data systems, resources, operations);
- Research effective strategies and activities to meet those goals;
- Develop methods to implement the strategies and activities; and
- Evaluate the success of that implementation.

During comprehensive planning, resources, timelines and persons responsible for implementation oversight are considered. Evaluation of the plan's success occurs both throughout the timeframe of the plan and at the end of the planning cycle. A fully-implemented planning process requires a commitment to sustain a continuous improvement model approach to district and school planning. This commitment will ensure the development and implementation of organizational structures, processes and practices that are efficient and effective in supporting and improving student learning

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Collaborative methods of data collection, review, analysis and plan development;
- Alignment of resources to support the core components of academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical development, educator quality and learning environment;
- Commitment to sustaining a continuous cycle of district and school improvement;
- Research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and program.

District Indicators

Indicator Number and Codes

The **first column** labels each indicator by a letter plus number code. The **second column** references possible changes made to that indicator such as N=New, R=Revised, M=Moved as well as codes which link an indicator to a particular initiative such as CL=Conditions for Learning, SC=Smart Common Core, RtI=Response to Intervention, ELL=English Language Learners, SPED=Special Education and Related Services and HS = High School. The **third column** identifies some indicators as **SmartStart (SS)**, **SmartPlan (SP)** and **SmartRestructuring (SR)** which are mandatory and must be present to bring an improvement plan into compliance. The **fourth column** lists the indicator and the parentheses following the indicator contains that indicator's corresponding evidence based Wise Way.

Indicator Number and Codes		DISTRICT Indicators - 48 total	
District Vision and Direction			
CC02	N-SC		The district develops and communicates its vision to ensure college and career readiness for all students to all stakeholders (e.g., school board, primary caregivers, teachers, staff, and community). (2320)
IA08		SP	The school board and superintendent present a unified vision for school improvement. (1124)
CII1	N		The district and school(s) have an aligned vision/mission statement that supports a learning environment which is emotionally safe and conducive to learning. (2321)
IA09	ELL	SP	The superintendent and other central office staff are accountable for school improvement and student learning outcomes. (1125)
CII5			The district celebrates its and its schools' successes in improving student academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development. (2322)
District and School Improvement Processes			
CII2			The district improvement process is aimed at student academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development. (2323)
CII3			The district's school improvement process is aimed at student academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development. (2324)
IA01	SC		The district builds partnerships with municipal and civic leaders, includes them in district and school improvement planning, and maintains regular communication with them. (1117)
IA02	SC		The district builds partnerships with community organizations in district and school improvement planning, and maintains regular communication with them. (1118)
IA03	SC		The district builds partnerships with parent organizations in district and school improvement planning, and maintains regular communication with them. (1119)
ID01		SS	A team structure is officially incorporated into the school improvement plan and school governance policy. (1152)
ID02	R		All teams have written statements of purpose and guidelines for their operation. (1153)
ID10		SP	The school's Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs. (1154)

IA07	R ELL	SS	In collaboration with its schools, the district sets district and school achievement targets for all students and for AYP subgroups. (1123)
IB01		SS	The district operates with district-level and school-level improvement teams. (1132)
IB03		SR	For each restructuring school, the district makes reference to guidance from What Works When regarding how to assess what the best restructuring options are given state and federal guidelines and its unique district and school context. (1134)
IB04		SR	For each restructuring school, the district ensures that the restructuring options chosen reflect the particular strengths and weaknesses of the restructuring school. (1135)
IB05		SR	For each restructuring school, the district ensures that the restructuring plan reflects the resources available to ensure its success. (1136)
IB06		SR	For each restructuring school, the district ensures that the restructuring plan includes both changes in governance and a detailed plan for school improvement. (1137)
IB07		SR	The district ensures that school improvement and restructuring plans include research-based, field-proven programs, practices, and models. (1138)
IB08		SR	The district ensures that school improvement and restructuring plans include a clear vision of what the school will look like when restructured or substantially improved. (1139)
IB09		SR	The district ensures that an empowered change agent (typically the principal) is appointed to head each restructuring school. (1140)
IB10		SR	In restructuring schools, the district ensures that the change agent (typically the principal) is skilled in motivating staff and the community, communicating clear expectations, and focusing on improved student learning. (1141)
IB11		SR	The district ensures that school improvement and restructuring plans include "quick wins," early successes in improvement. (1142)

IB12	R	SR	The district is prepared for setbacks, resistance, and obstacles on the path to substantial change in the context of school improvement and restructuring. (1143)
District Allocation of Resources for School Improvement			
IA14	ELL	SP	The district recruits, trains, supports, and places personnel to competently address the problems of schools in need of improvement. (1130)
IA04			The district provides incentives for staff who work effectively in hard-to-staff and restructured schools. (1120)
IA05	R R-CL		The district builds partnerships/contracts with external providers to provide critical services in restructured schools and schools in status based on data-driven identified needs. (1121)
IA06	SC	SP	The district provides and maintains for schools the technology, training, and support needed for integrated data collection, reporting and analysis systems. (1122)
CI14			The district provides and maintains for schools the technology, training, and support needed for effective application of assistive technology. (2325)
IA10	R-CL	SP	The district regularly allocates/reallocates resources to support school, staff, and instructional improvement. (1126)
IA11	ELL	SS	The district ensures that key pieces of user-friendly data are available in a timely fashion at the district, school, and classroom levels. (1127)
IB02	R	SS	In collaboration with its schools, the district examines improvement strategies being implemented across the district and determines their value, expanding, modifying, and culling as evidence suggests. (1133)
IC06		SP	The district provides the technology, training, and support to facilitate the school's data management needs. (1149)
District Support for School Improvement and Student Achievement			
IA12		SP	The district intervenes early when a school is not making adequate progress. (1128)
IA13	RtI ELL	SP	The district works with the school to provide early and intensive intervention for students not making progress. (1129)
IA15			The district allows school leaders reasonable autonomy to do things differently in order to succeed. (1131)

IC01		SP	The school reports and documents its progress monthly to the superintendent, and the superintendent reports the school's progress to the school board. (1144)
IC02		SP	The district designates a central office contact person for the school, and that person maintains close communication with the school and an interest in its progress. (1145)
IC03			District and school decision makers meet at least twice a month to discuss the school's progress. (1146)
IC04			District policies and procedures clarify the scope of site-based decision making granted to a school and are summarized in a letter of understanding. (1147)
IC05	R SC	SS	The district provides a cohesive district curriculum guide aligned with state standards or otherwise places curricular expectations on the school. (1148)
D7	N SC	SP	The district monitors to ensure the intended curriculum is implemented with fidelity. (2326)
D9	N SC		The district curriculum encompasses a set of knowledge, skills and behaviors of appropriate content and rigor to prepare students for both college and careers. (2327)
D11	N Rtl		The district ensures the delivery of the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. (2328)
D13	N Rtl		The district ensures that all district and school stakeholders are knowledgeable about Response to Intervention (Rtl) implementation by providing support, guidance, training, and professional development. (2329)
IC07	ELL	SP	Professional development is built into the school schedule by the district, but the school is allowed discretion in selecting training and consultation that fit the requirements of its improvement/restructuring plan and its evolving needs. (1150)
IC08		SP	Staff development is built into the schedule for support staff (e.g., aides, clerks, custodians, cooks) as well as classroom teachers. (1151)

School Indicators

Indicator Number and Codes

The **first column** labels each indicator by a letter plus number code. The **second column** references possible changes made to that indicator such as N=New **R=Revised** **M=Moved** as well as codes which link an indicator to a particular initiative such as CL=Conditions for

Learning, SC=Smart Common Core, Rtl=Response to Intervention, ELL=English Language Learners, SPED=Special Education and Related Services and HS = High School. The **third column** identifies some indicators as **SmartStart (SS)**, **SmartPlan (SP)** and **SmartRestructuring (SR)** which are mandatory and must be present to bring an improvement plan into compliance. The **fourth column** lists the indicator and the parentheses following the indicator contains that indicator's corresponding evidence based Wise Way.

Category: Educator Quality

Element: Leadership

Leaders create and sustain organizational direction, expectations, and a system that promotes excellence. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community; (2) advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (3) ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (4) collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (5) acting with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner; and (6) understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Share leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Articulate a compelling need for improvement and provide meaningful ways for the professional learning community to focus on its performance.
- Engage in practices that support the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

Indicator Number and Codes			School - Educator Quality Indicators - 21 total
			Leadership
ID01		SS	A team structure is officially incorporated into the school improvement plan and school governance policy. (1012)
ID02	R		All teams have written statements of purpose and guidelines for their operation. (1013)
CII7	N CL		All staff interactions in all meetings (staff, problem solving, committees, planning, conferences, etc.) and in the instructional setting reflect a "Culture of Candor" and a climate of trust, respect and collaboration that is focused on norms and adult social and emotional competencies. (2337)
ID06		SS	The principal maintains a file of the agendas, work products, and minutes of all teams. (1017)
ID07		SS	A Leadership Team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly (twice a month or more for an hour each meeting). (1018)

ID08		SS	The Leadership Team serves as a conduit of communication to the faculty and staff. (1019)
ID10		SS	The school's Leadership Team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs. (1021)
ID11			Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area Instructional Teams. (1171)
ID13	R		Instructional Teams meet for blocks of time sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning data. (1173)
IE05			The principal participates actively with the school's teams. (1026)
IE06		SP	The principal keeps a focus on instructional improvement and student learning outcomes. (1027)
IE07		SP	The principal monitors curriculum and classroom instruction regularly. (1028)
IE08	SC		The principal spends at least 50% of his/her time working directly with teachers to improve instruction, including classroom observations. (1029)
IE09	R SC		The principal challenges, supports and monitors the correction of unsound teaching practices based on evidence. (1030)
IE10	R		The principal celebrates individual, team, and school successes, especially related to all student learning outcomes throughout the year. (1031)

Element: Professional Development

A continuous improvement approach to professional development builds on scientific, evidence-based research, incorporates innovative instructional practices, engages teachers in new curricular designs, explores assessment techniques, and requires educators to develop needed skills in areas identified in the plan. The fundamental grounding of professional development is in student needs, which will drive decision-making and student learning and form the basis on which professional development is planned, implemented, and evaluated. Districts and schools must plan for professional development that is ongoing and job-embedded, aligned with student performance goals, and aligned with the analysis of the test data. Collective professional development aimed at student learning goals requires focused leadership that is distributed among faculty and administration. The best way to have true leadership is to have a professional development leadership team. High-quality professional development adheres to national professional development standards.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Organize adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- Use disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Deepen educators’ content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

Indicator Number and Codes			School - Educator Quality Indicators - 21 total
			Professional Development
IF05	R-CL SC		Professional development for teachers includes self – assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management. (1039)
CL16	N-CL		Professional development for teachers is determined by data (including classroom observations and review of lesson plans) that demonstrate the preparation for and application of Learning Supports. (2338)
CL17	N-CL		Professional development for teachers is determined by data (including classroom observations and review of lesson plans) that demonstrate teachers' attention to academic, social, emotional, and behavioral expectations and standards. (2339)
IF06			Teachers are required to make individual professional development plans based on classroom observations. (1040)
IF08		SP	Professional development for the whole faculty includes assessment of strengths and areas in need of improvement from classroom observations of indicators of effective teaching. (1042)
IF10	R		Professional development includes opportunities for teachers to share their strengths with other teachers. (1044)

Category: Learning Environment

Element - Conditions for Learning

In order to ensure desired results of improved teaching and learning, districts and schools must cultivate safe and stabilized environments. These environments need to provide the necessary conditions for learning and have improvement embedded in daily practices.

Successful districts and schools engage in an improvement process where Administration and school personnel:

- Share a common vision and goals that have student learning as the focus;
- Ensure an optimal learning environment that promotes a healthy development;
- Addresses barriers to teaching and learning;

- Supports student motivation and re-engages the disengaged student;
- Improves individual and collective performance by coming together regularly for learning, decision-making, problem solving, and celebration;
- Enhances continuously individual effectiveness through inquiry, practice, and peer reflection; and
- Supports a culture of collegiality, collaboration, respect, and trust.

By implementing this type of improvement process, all children are enabled to succeed while addressing varying factors that interfere with their success at school. The practices that are implemented to address the varying factors tend to overlap or are fragmented unless a comprehensive integrated system is developed to enhance coordination of these fragmented efforts. When a “Learning Supports” system is implemented, the conditions necessary for teaching and learning are provided so teachers can teach and students can learn.

Indicator Number and Codes			School – Conditions for Learning – 11 total
CL1	N-CL RtI		The school's Learning Support System includes academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral programming based on school-wide, targeted group and individualized needs. (2343)
CL2	N-CL		School Leadership identifies and allocates/reallocates resources needed for Learning Supports' implementation. (2344)
CL3	N-CL RtI		School Leadership monitors and evaluates the implementation of Learning Supports' programming through an on-going data collection system. (2345)
CL4	N-CL		All school personnel actively model and foster a positive school environment where students feel valued and are challenged to be engaged and grow cognitively. (2346)
CL5	N R-CL		School Leadership actively models and fosters a positive school environment where staff members feel valued and are challenged to be engaged and grow professionally. (2347)
CL7	N CL	SS	The environment of the school (physical, social, emotional, and behavioral) is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning. (2348)
CL8	N CL RtI		The school culture supports teachers in practicing effective and responsive instruction to meet individual student needs. (2349)
CL9	N-CL		All teachers invite valid and reliable Learning Supports identified by their school leadership into their classrooms including but not limited to programs/strategies, co-teaching opportunities, and consultation. (2350)

CL10	N R-CL		The school culture promotes and supports the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral skill development and engagement of students. (2351)
CL11	N-CL		The school culture promotes and supports the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral health of all school personnel. (2352)
CL12	N CL		All school personnel work effectively and equitably with racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students. (2353)

Element: Community and Family Engagement

A broad base of stakeholders reflects the entire community and includes staff, students, primary caregivers such as parents/families, business and community representatives, and school board members. Stakeholders maintain significant involvement in the development, implementation, plan review, parent involvement practices and compacts, and ongoing communications about student achievement. Family activities provide academic enrichment and learning support to help students meet state learning standards.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Involve stakeholders in the school improvement process.
- Communicate school improvement progress.
- Identify activities for parent/family involvement in the school improvement plan.
- Involve parents in the development and review of the school parental procedures, practices, and compacts.

Indicator Number and Codes			School – Community and Family Engagement Indicators - 9 total
IVA03	R	SP	The school's Compact outlines the responsibilities/expectations of teachers, primary caregivers, and students. (1113)
IVD01	R	SP	The school's Compact is annually distributed to teachers, school personnel, primary caregivers, and students. (1114)
IVD02	R	SP	The "ongoing conversation" between school personnel and primary caregivers is candid, supportive, and flows in both directions. (1115)
IVD03	R SC	SP	The school regularly and clearly communicates with primary caregivers about its expectations of them and the importance of the "curriculum of the home." (1155)
CF1	N		All teachers share school policy on homework with primary caregivers. (2340)

CL6	NR-CL R-SC M		School Leadership and primary caregivers engage in regular communication to provide mutual supports and guidance between home and school for all aspects of student learning. (2341)
CL15	N-CL		All teachers communicate regularly with primary caregivers and encourage them to participate as active partners in teaching and reinforcing physical, social, emotional, behavioral, and academic competencies. (2342)
IIIB06	M SC ELL	SP	All teachers systematically report to primary caregivers the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives. (1097)
IE13	M		The principal offers frequent opportunities for stakeholders to voice constructive critique of the school's progress and suggestions for improvement. (1034)

Category: Teaching and Learning

Element: Curriculum

A school or district curriculum is an educational plan that defines what the expectations are for the content, knowledge, and skills to be learned as well as the resources to be employed for documenting student progress and achievement. It is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and Performance Indicators. It allows for the collection of data to inform instruction. Ideally, the curriculum is vertically aligned between grade levels and horizontally integrated across content areas.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Develop and continually review the curriculum.
- Align curriculum to state and national standards.
- Monitor the fidelity of curriculum implementation at the classroom level.

Indicator Number and Codes		School – Teaching and Learning Indicators Indicators-63 total Aligned Instruction and Curriculum	
IIA01	R SC ELL	SP	Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level. (1045)
IIA02			Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery. (1046)
CI16			Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction that promote academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development. (2330)

Element: Instruction

Instruction refers to how teachers implement purposeful, planned methods, strategies, and activities to teach curriculum so students achieve mastery of the Illinois Learning Standards. Effective instruction recognizes and respects the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of every student. Effective instruction is responsive to and directed by student data. Data from progress monitoring and formative assessment identify student learning needs and then drive appropriate and timely intervention.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Apply varied effective instructional methods, strategies, and activities for all students based on data.
- Target early intervening services both to students at risk of failing to meet the Illinois Learning Standards and to the academically gifted.
- Align instruction to the Illinois Learning Standards.

Indicator Number and Codes			School – Teaching and Learning Instruction Indicators
			Differentiated Instruction
IIC01	R-SC	SS	Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives. (1083)
IIC03	ELL SC		Materials for standards-aligned learning activities are well-organized, labeled, and stored for convenient use by teachers. (1085)
			Instruction-Preparation
IIIA01	SC	SS	All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. (1063)
IIIA02	R R-CL SC		All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction. (1064)
IIIA05			All teachers maintain a record of each student’s mastery of specific learning objectives. (1067)
IIIA06	ELL	SP	All teachers test frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and maintain a record of the results. (1068)
IIIA07	RtI ELL	SP	All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment. (1069)
TL2	N R-CL		All teachers establish in their lesson plans and explicitly define to students high and realistic academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral expectations for their

			learning so that they know what is needed for them to achieve at proficient levels. (2331)
TL1	N SC		All teachers demonstrate in their lesson plans the content knowledge necessary to challenge and motivate students to high levels of learning. (2332)
			Instruction-Teacher Directed - Introduction
IIIA08			All teachers review the previous lesson. (1070)
IIIA09			All teachers clearly state the lesson's topic, theme, and objectives. (1071)
IIIA10			All teachers stimulate interest in the topics. (1072)
IIIA11			All teachers use modeling, demonstration, and graphics. (1073)
			Instruction-Teacher Directed - Presentation
IIIA13			All teachers explain directly and thoroughly. (1075)
IIIA14			All teachers maintain eye contact. (1076)
IIIA15			All teachers speak with expression and use a variety of vocal tones. (1077)
IIIA16			All teachers use prompting/cueing. (1078)
TL5	R		All teachers utilize high-quality questions and provide adequate time for student response. (2333)
			Instruction-Teacher Directed - Summary and Confirmation
IIIA17			All teachers re-teach when necessary. (1079)
IIIA18			All teachers review with drilling/class recitation. (1080)
IIIA19			All teachers review with questioning. (1081)
IIIA20			All teachers summarize key concepts. (1082)
			Instruction- Interaction
IIIA21			All teachers re-teach following questioning. (1086)
IIIA25			All teachers encourage students to paraphrase, summarize, and relate. (1090)
IIIA26			All teachers encourage students to check their own comprehension. (1091)
IIIA27			All teachers verbally praise students. (1092)
CL19	N-CL		All teachers model physical, social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive competencies. (2334)
			Instruction- Student Directed - (Group or Individual)
IIIA28			All teachers travel to all areas in which students are working. (1093)
IIIA31			All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback). (1157)
IIIA32			All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures). (1158)

IIIA33			All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family). (1159)
			Instruction – Technology
IIIA35		SP	Students are engaged and on task. (1161)
IIIA40			All teachers assess student mastery in ways other than those provided by the computer program. (1166)
TL9	N SC		All teachers incorporate the use of technology in their classrooms when it enhances instruction and builds 21st Century Learning Skills. (2335)
			Instruction - Parent Communication and Homework
IIIB01			All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents. (1167)
IIIB02			All teachers regularly assign homework (4 or more days a week). (1168)
IIIB03			All teachers check, mark, and return homework. (1169)
			Instruction - Classroom Management
IIIC01			When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher. (1098)
IIIC04			Students raise hands or otherwise signal before speaking. (1101)
IIIC05			All teachers use a variety of instructional modes. (1102)
IIIC06			All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom. (1103)
IIIC08			All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom. (1105)
IIIC09			All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures. (1106)
IIIC10			All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them. (1107)
IIIC12	ELL	SP	All teachers engage all students (e.g., encourages a silent student to participate). (1109)
CL22	N-CL		All teachers acknowledge appropriate student behaviors and desired social skills and provide differential attention/response to inappropriate behaviors. (2336)

Element: Assessment

Assessment is the process of judging and measuring the students' acquisition of the intended content, knowledge, and skills as set out in the curriculum. It includes collecting, recording, scoring, monitoring, and interpreting information about a student's progress, a teacher's

instruction, and a school’s overall effectiveness. Some assessments are used for accountability purposes, but the primary purpose of assessment at the classroom level is to inform instructional decisions and ultimately to improve student achievement. In addition to state assessment data, each district, school, and teacher must be engaged in using formative assessment to monitor student learning progress and inform classroom instruction.

Successful schools and districts engage in the following improvement processes:

- Align assessment with the district or school curriculum and the Illinois Learning Standards.
- Collect, review, and analyze data and apply the analysis to problem solving.
- Use assessments to frequently monitor student progress and to guide instruction.

Indicator Number and Codes			School – Teaching and Learning Assessment Indicators
			Assessment
IIB01	SC		Units of instruction include pretests and posttests to assess student mastery of standards-based objectives. (1048)
IIB02			Unit pretests and posttests are administered to all students in the grade level and subject covered by the unit of instruction. (1049)
IIB03	R SC		Unit pretest and posttest results are reviewed by the Instructional Team to monitor student progress in relation to standards based benchmarks. (1050)
IIB04	R RtI ELL		Teachers differentiate instruction based on assessment results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others. (1051)
IIB05			All teachers re-teach based on posttest results. (1052)
			Periodic Assessment
IID02	SC		The school tests each student 3 times each year to determine progress toward standards-based objectives. (1054)
IID03	SC		Teachers receive timely reports of results from standardized and objectives-based tests. (1055)
IID04	ELL	SS	The school maintains a central database that includes each student's test scores, placement information, demographic information, attendance, behavior indicators, and other variables useful to teachers. (1116)
IID06	R	SS	Yearly learning goals are set for the school by the Leadership Team utilizing student learning data. (1057)

IID07	SC	SS	The Leadership Team monitors school-level student learning data. (1058)
IID08	R R-CL SC ELL	SP	Instructional Teams review student learning data (academic, physical, social, emotional, behavioral) to assess and make decisions about curriculum and instructional strategies. (1059)
IID09	R-CL SC		Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan standards driven instruction. (1060)
IID10	R-CL Rtl		Instructional Teams use student learning data to identify students in need of instructional support, intervention, or enhancement. (1061)
IID11			Instructional Teams review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to "red flag" students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced learning opportunities because of their early mastery of objectives). (1062)

Making Rising Star Work for You

Adapted from *Making Indistar Work for You* (Dr. Sam Redding, 2010)

Rising Star is Illinois' version of Indistar; a web-based tool that guides a district or school team in charting its progress and managing the continuous improvement process. Indistar is a platform that can be adapted by each state to fit its needs. Indistar is called different things in different states. For example, Illinois calls it Rising Star, Alaska calls it STEPP, Idaho and Oklahoma calls it the WISE tool, and the Bureau of Indian Education calls it Native Star. The system is also tailored for the purposes of each state, its districts, and its schools.

Rising Star is premised on the firm belief that district and school improvement is best accomplished when directed by the people closest to the students. While the state provides a framework for the process, each district team and school team applies its own ingenuity to achieve the results it desires for its students-- students it knows and cares about.

Providing a district or school team with an improvement process that encourages local ingenuity and responsibility changes the dynamic between localities and the State. It also requires a "culture of candor" in which district and school personnel talk openly and honestly about their professional practices that contribute to student learning. When reports are electronically submitted to the State, there is no premium for "the right answer." The right answer is the one the local team determines will bring the district or school to the highest level of professional performance for the benefit of students.

Placing this high level of confidence in the ability of district and school personnel to chart their own course also requires that the district or school team is given convenient access to tools, resources, and effective practice to get the job done.

Rising Star is a web based continuous improvement tool organized around indicators of effective practices at both the district and school level. After steps 1-3 (see sample below) are completed, the real improvement work occurs in steps 4-6 (see sample below).

Set Up District/School	Started	Last Update	
Step 1 - Register District/School	06/28/10	12/06/10	
Step 2 - Provide District/School Information	06/30/10	12/06/10	
- Provide District/School Assessment Scores	08/26/10	10/07/10	
Step 3 - Form District/School Team	07/12/10	10/07/10	8 (count)

Assess - Create - Monitor	Started	Last Update	Progress
Step 4 - Assess District/School Indicators	08/18/10	10/04/10	79 of 79
Step 5 - Create District/School Plan	08/19/10	01/13/11	11 of 33
Step 6 - Monitor District/School Plan	10/02/10	04/25/11	0 of 11

Step 4 asks the team to "assess" indicators of effective practice by reading the corresponding Wise Way research evidence and then evaluating the level of development of that practice as fully met, partially met, or not met. The system allows the team to apply a Priority (indicates

importance) and Opportunity (ease for accomplishment) index score for each assessed indicator enabling the team to gain quick wins as well as establishing more involved improvement work goals.

Step 5 allows the team to design a plan for those indicators assessed in Step 4 which were determined to be of high priority and opportunity. The system automatically rephrases the indicator into an objective upon which the team designs tasks for achieving that objective. Tasks include duty details, persons responsible and target dates for completion.

Step 6 allows the team to self monitor the progress of tasks. After tasks are completed, the system prompts the team to judge whether the objective (indicator of effective practice) has been met. If met, the team must provide a status report describing evidence of completion levels. For objectives not met, the system prompts the team to develop additional targeted tasks that will hopefully lead to a fully met objective.

In addition, Rising Star includes Wise Ways research briefs, mentioned above, to support its indicators of effective practice. Rising Star also provides Indicators in Action video modules demonstrating the practices, and the technology for Coaches to coach the teams in real time. Rising Star enables Coaches to assist the teams with coaching comments about the team's ongoing work, with dialogue from the teams.

Here are some tips to make Rising Star work for you.

1. **The Team**: Rising Star provides guidance for the district's or school's primary decision-making team. This is not an additional team. You may call your district or school team a Leadership Team or Improvement Team or something else. No matter what it is called, the team should include the chief administrator—superintendent for a district team and principal for a school team. Other members of the team are typically selected to provide proper representation. For example, a district team may include key district personnel, a school board member, a parent and a community representative. A school team most likely includes teacher leaders of instructional teams, departments, or subject-area teams, as well as a representative from student support services such as a psychologist, counselor, or social worker. Teams vary in size, but a team of six to eight members usually proves to be the right size.
2. **The Process Manager**: Each team needs a Process Manager, a person who interfaces with the web system, prepares agendas and worksheets, distributes documents to team member in advance of meetings, and enters the team's minutes and work products into the system. The Process Manager also distributes coaching comments and Wise Ways research briefs to team members and enters the team's response to coaching comments in the system to maintain a dialogue with the Coach. The superintendent and principal have the same access privileges to the system as the district Process Manager and school Process Manager respectively.

3. An Educative Process: Discussing fully each indicator of effective practice contributes to each team member's understanding of research-based practice and the level of implementation of the practice in the district or school. Wise Ways and Indicators in Action provide ideal material for staff meetings, faculty meetings, and professional development activities. The Guest Login allows all faculty, school board members, and parents to view the ongoing work and progress of the team and to understand the indicators.
4. Effective Teams: An effective team is one on which every member attends regularly, meetings start and end on time, and a focus is maintained on the work at hand. Team members do their homework, preparing for each meeting by reviewing Wise Ways and Indicators in Action. Discussion is rich, everyone participates equally, and decisions are made after full consideration and everyone's input. Minutes are kept and recorded in the system. Teams need sufficient blocks of time for their work, and teams are most effective when they meet twice a month.
5. Data for Decision Making: To accurately assess current performance relative to an indicator of effective practice, the team needs information. For example, the team may ask the principal to log his or her use of time for a couple weeks to know if the principal is able to spend at least 50% of his or her time on instruction. The team may ask for peer observations, principal observations, or self-reports by teachers to gauge the prevalence of specific instructional practices in classrooms. Planning and gathering data is an important part of the team's work.
6. Evidence of Full Implementation: When a team determines that an indicator is being "fully implemented" in the district or school, the system asks for evidence. The evidence is not to prove to the State or another external entity that the practice is fully implemented, but to satisfy the team that the practice is fully implemented for the benefit of students. Accountability is to the students. That is a high bar. The evidence should simply address the literal meaning of the indicator, nothing more and nothing less. Pages of documentation are not required, just a summary statement of what the documentation shows.
7. Keeping it Simple: When the team is assessing an indicator, it should not stray into planning for improvement. Simply assess the current status. During the planning phase of the improvement cycle, the team develops a series of tasks that it thinks will lead to full implementation. Straight-forward tasks, assigned to the people with chief responsibility, with target dates for completion, keep everyone focused on the work at hand.
8. Consider the Context: The indicators are organized into categories and sub-categories that give them context. **Consider clusters of related indicators when assessing and**

planning. For example, a set of indicators may address team procedures—scheduling time for meetings, preparing agendas, and recording minutes. This cluster of indicators may be reviewed as they relate to each other. Instructional indicators are arranged for specific modes of instruction, and specific phases of delivery. For example, a set of indicators may have to do with how a new lesson is introduced. Consider these indicators in that context, and in relationship to each other.

9. **Task Lists:** The system allows the principal or Process Manager to generate task lists that can be distributed to personnel for whom tasks have been assigned. Reviewing the task lists at meetings enables the team to record the completion of tasks and determine upcoming work.
10. **Focus on Support:** When an indicator cannot be assessed as fully implemented, the planning phase should include the supports (training, coaching, for example) that staff need to reach the mark. The purpose of assessing indicators is not to “evaluate” individual performance but to determine what supports are needed to reach full implementation.
11. **All Means All:** Instructional indicators typically state that “all teachers. . .” routinely exhibit the effective practice. If some teachers are strong on this indicator, they are good candidates to assist other teachers or provide professional development. But the goal is always to reach universal application of the practice, consistently and school-wide.
12. **So Many Indicators:** That’s why it is a continuous process, not a plan to be achieved in one year. Districts and schools are places where many professional skills and practices are required. The indicators help the teams focus on what matters most in professional performance. Achieving big, global goals comes from masterful execution of many specific practices. We expect surgeons, attorneys, accountants, architects, and other professional to be masters of a wide array of skills relative to their professions. The same is true for educators. Rising Star enables the team to set priorities and achieve “quick wins” as well as to doggedly pursue the implementation of more difficult indicators.
13. **Interacting with Coaches:** The system allows for a district liaison and a Coach to coach district and school teams. The team should review the coaching comments and respond to them with comments or questions, establishing a positive dialogue.
14. **Effective Coaching:** The most effective coaching comments typically come in the form of questions that prompt the team to think more deeply or differently about its work or suggestions for accessing resources or considering new ideas. While the Coach may challenge the team to consider the strength of the evidence it provides for full

implementation, the team is not accountable to the Coach but to themselves and their students.

15. Reporting Progress: The various reports that can be easily generated in the system, as well as the charts and graphs in Where Are We Now? Provide a convenient way to regularly report progress to the school board, at leadership meetings, at faculty meetings, and to parent organizations.
16. Building from Strength: Rising Star enables teams to recognize and celebrate accomplishments. The process is not deficiency-focused, but balances attention to areas that need improvement with acknowledgement of areas of strength. Don't be afraid to applaud and shout "Woo Hoo" when an indicator is fully implemented.
17. The Right Spirit: Districts and schools have sometimes become burdened with planning processes that seem unproductive and compliance driven. No need for that with Rising Star. When teams are engaged in discussion about the things that matter most to them, and encouraged to apply their ingenuity in mastering their challenges and achieving their goals, the process is a professional joy. Embrace the process, and enjoy its richness. The time saved by efficient generation and electronic submission of reports can be applied to the more meaningful work of teams doing what they know is best for their students. Working on the work is part of the work, not a distraction from it.

From Coaching With Indicators (Dr. Sam Redding, 2010)

Dr. Sam Redding from the Center on Innovation and Improvement has investigated how leadership teams guide continuous improvement. Dr. Redding offers the following guidance informed by his investigations to coaches and consultants on how best to support the continuous improvement process at both the district and school level through the use of the Illinois Rising Star tool, using indicators as measures of effective practice.

School improvement is typically driven by a leadership team. Scrutiny of student learning data informs their decisions and plans. An annual school improvement plan is their primary roadmap. The plan is created and followed for a year, and then the cycle starts again. These plans begin by addressing specific student groups and subject areas where the annual assessment shows weakness. The goal is to improve the scores that are low.

Continuous improvement, with indicators of effective practice, follows a different path. In addition to scrutiny of student learning data, the team analyzes the staff's professional practices that contribute to student outcomes. Rather than focusing only on improvement in areas where the last annual test showed weakness, continuous improvement examines professional practices school-wide, and seeks to elevate performance across the board, including the most recent areas of deficiency. Instead of creating a plan once a year, the team engages in a continuous improvement process that is always assessing current practice relative to indicators of effectiveness, planning immediate steps to full implementation, and monitoring progress. Periodically, a snapshot of the work creates a report that marks progress at that point in time, but the improvement cycle continues at pace and without interruption.

The Coach's role in an indicator-based, continuous improvement process is always to increase the capacity of the school team to function within a culture of candor so they might accurately determine the level of implementation of effective practices, while striving toward universal and consistent practice. Where does student learning data come into play? Specific indicators address how individual teachers, teacher instructional teams, and the leadership team use real-time data in making decisions, designing instruction, re-teaching, both elevating expectations for students showing early mastery and providing support for students lagging behind. Truly, each student's progress is closely assessed at many points in time, and instruction is targeted to that student's needs and degree of mastery.

The Coach serves the school best when helping the leadership team understand the meaning of each indicator, gather information necessary for an accurate assessment of current practice relative to the indicator, plan improvement, and monitor results until the team is assured that the practice is fully implemented across the school. The Coach interacts with the team in a way that might be called "metacognitive guidance." That means "thinking out loud" to model for the team how to analyze current performance relative to an indicator and how to plan concrete steps leading to its full implementation. By thinking out loud, asking critical questions, and holding the team to a high level of candor, the Coach embeds in the team the abilities and procedures for continuous improvement.

Examination of current practice provides the opportunity to show where practice is already strong as well as where improvement is needed. Thus, in recognizing excellence and deficiencies, the school team builds strength while honing professional practice in leadership, teaming processes, instructional planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, and school community and family engagement. The emphasis on what the adults do makes high student achievement possible.

What is an indicator of effective practice?

An indicator of effective practice is a concrete, behavioral expression of a professional practice that research demonstrates contributes to student learning. An indicator is expressed in plain language so that a school team can answer with certainty whether or not it is standard practice in the school.

What constitutes evidence of full implementation of an indicator of effective practice?

The school team must candidly prove to itself that all the personnel for whom an indicator applies routinely demonstrate effective application of the indicator. The evidence must satisfy the meaning of the indicator and the high standard set by the team. Each indicator must be deconstructed in literal terms, so that the evidence shows clearly that the indicator is met. This does not require reams of documentation, but access to specific data relative to the indicator and a succinct statement that the data are conclusive in showing that the indicator is met.

How does the team prioritize the indicators to gain “quick wins” while also working over a longer time horizon to ultimately implement all indicators?

As each indicator is assessed to determine the current level of implementation, it is also prioritized in terms of its importance and rated according to the difficulty of its achievement. This combination of priority and opportunity produces an index score that the team can take into account in planning improvement. Thus, indicators of relatively high priority that are also relatively easily achieved are tackled first, gaining quick wins that motivate the team to dig in and work toward the more difficult indicators.

What does a plan look like?

A plan is constructed by setting forth a series of tasks that would logically lead to full implementation of the indicator. For each task, someone is assigned chief responsibility for seeing that it is carried out, and a target date is established for its completion.

What should be considered in creating a plan to fully implement an indicator?

The first question to ask is whether the people to whom the indicator applies are aware that this practice is expected of them. If not, then communicating the expectation might be a first task. A second set of tasks might deal with how the indicator is discussed with the people responsible for it so that they have a good understanding of the expectation. Some professional development may be needed. Then tasks would include methods for gathering the data necessary to know the status of implementation and to determine if additional coaching or training is necessary.

What happens when all the tasks are completed?

When all the tasks leading to full implementation of an indicator are completed, the team re-assesses the indicator. If the team now has data that show the indicator has been achieved, the team provides succinct evidence. If the data show that the tasks have been completed but the indicator not achieved, the team adds tasks and continues its work toward full implementation.

Can an indicator be “re-assessed”?

Of course. This is a **continuous** improvement process. If an indicator has been initially assessed as “fully implemented,” the team may return to it at any time and change the assessment so that it can plan its implementation. Once an indicator has been assessed as Not Implemented, or Limited Implementation, the team can only change the assessment by completing the tasks (or deleting unnecessary tasks) and then providing evidence of full implementation.

What are coaching comments?

The Coach interfaces with a leadership team in many ways. For example, they may meet onsite for consultation, speak via conference call or webinar, talk individually with the principal and other staff, and through emails. However, coaching comments embedded in the Rising Star system provide a means for documenting key points of advice and congratulations; always with specific reference to the indicator and the team’s work. The coaching comments allow the team to respond with its own questions and clarifications, which maintains the dialogue between Coach and team. This provides a rich tracking of the thinking of the coach and the team, and is useful in future work as well as in cases where a new Coach or new team members may come on the scene. Also, the Coach, using the Coach’s Review feature, periodically conducts a more thorough review, examines a variety of reports conveniently provided for the Coach.

What basic expectations guide a Coach’s work?

The primary responsibility of the Coach is to see that the Leadership Team meets regularly, with full participation by all members, and candidly addresses the indicators of effective practice. Secondly, the Coach, coaches the team to understand the indicators, develop tasks leading to full implementation, and adequately describe their evidence of full implementation. Finally, the Coach reminds the team to submit (electronically through the system) the periodic reports required by State.

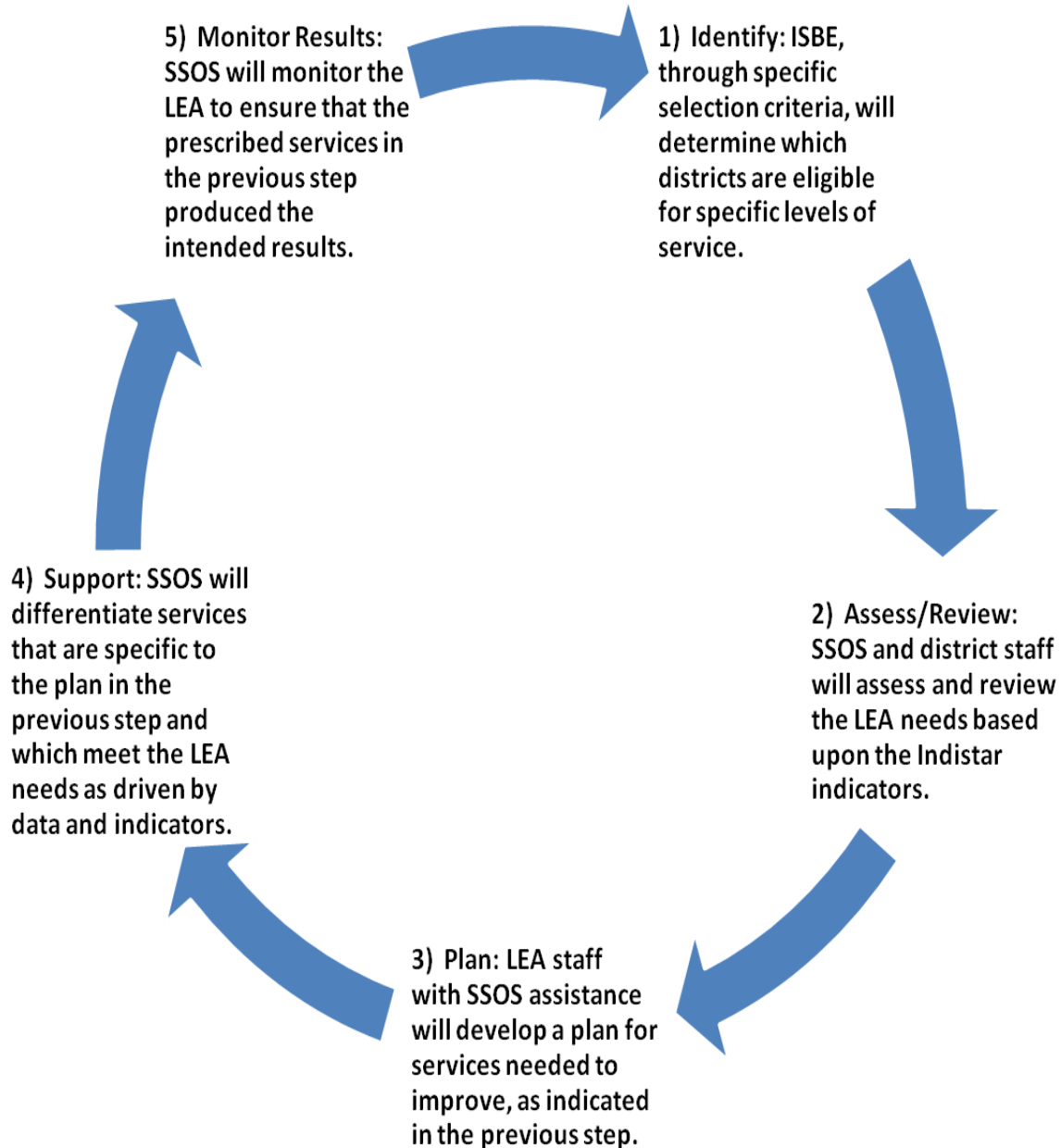
Basic guidelines for the Coach include:

1. **Ensure Effective Teaming.** Know when the Leadership Team is meeting and remind the Principal and Process Manager to prepare and distribute the agenda, worksheets, and Wise Ways. This may require phone calls and emails as well as coaching comments. Help the Team function as a “professional learning community.”
2. **Reinforce the Rising Star Work.** Review the Leadership Team’s work by entering the system with the Team and discussing what has been done and what lies ahead. Note upcoming reporting dates. Review Summary Reports and Task Reports.

3. **Leadership.** Meet with the Team Leader I and Process Manager to review Rising Star procedures and the Leadership Team's functioning. Leadership and participation by the superintendent and principal is essential.
4. **Entry of Work.** Remind the Superintendent/Principal and Process Manager to enter the Leadership Team's work during the Leadership Team meeting or immediately after.
5. **Routine Entry of Coaching Comments.** Enter coaching comments after each Leadership Team meeting and at least twice a month.
6. **Integration of Programs.** Help the Leadership Team integrate other programs and responsibilities within the Rising Star process. Because Rising Star focuses on professional practice rather than programs, it supports implementation of all good programs.
7. **Inclusion and Transparency.** Encourage the district/school to distribute the Guest Login to all faculty and staff, parents, and school board members and help these groups to understand the meaning of the reports they view. Prepare the Superintendent/Principal and Leadership Team members to explain Rising Star to all stakeholders. Videos, Power Points, and other documents are available in the Resource section of Rising Star.

The SSOS Service and Support Cycle

This five-step problem-solving model provides a cyclical approach for the SSOS and the LEA to promote rigorous continuous improvement.



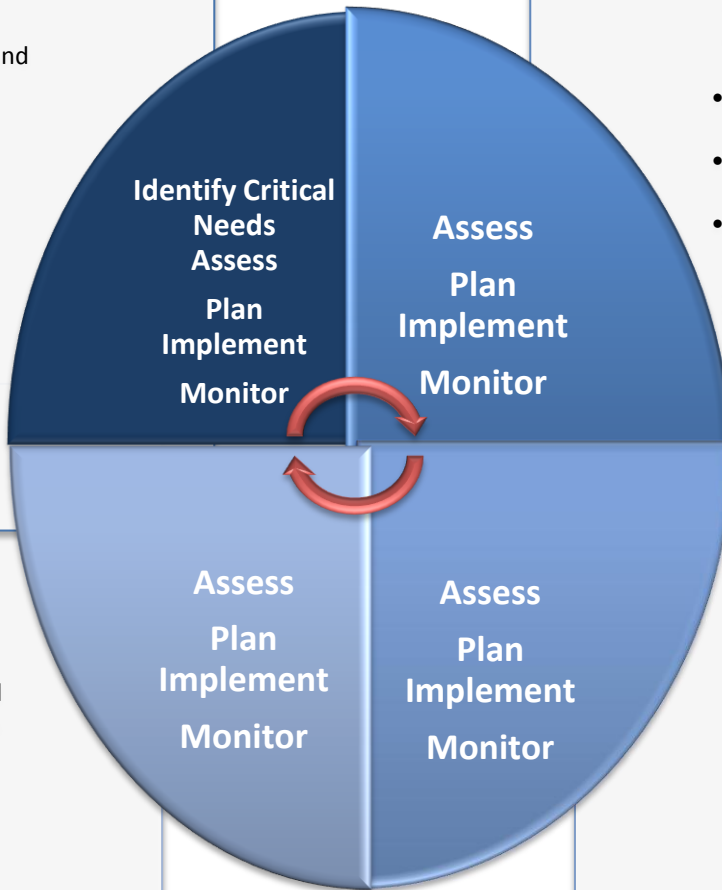
**Illinois State Board of Education - Statewide System of Support
Continuous Improvement Framework for **Districts** Using *Rising Star***

**Phase 1
SmartStart**

- Identify/reconvene district teams
- Review and analyze data to isolate critical need areas
- Assess all, then plan for and monitor high priority /opportunity
SmartStart Indicators
Submit by September 30, 2011

**Phase 2
SmartPlan**

- Continue to advance the plan with bi weekly team meetings to assess indicators, then design and monitor the completion of timely tasks designed for high priority/opportunity indicators/objectives
- Reflect upon and respond using coaching comments
- Remember to celebrate successes
- Assess all, then plan for and monitor high priority /opportunity
SmartPlan Indicators
Submit by October 28, 2011



- Continue to assess, plan and monitor progress of implementation.
- Reflect upon and respond using coaching comments
- Remember to celebrate successes
- Assess all, then plan for and monitor high priority /opportunity
SmartCore Indicators
Submit by February 15, 2012
- By **May 30, 2012**, set summer and first meeting agenda for next school year.

- Implement the plan and adjust/add additional tasks to bring the objectives to full implementation.
- Reflect upon and respond using coaching comments
- For schools new to restructuring, assess all, then plan for and monitor high priority/opportunity
SmartRestructuring Indicators
Submit by January 20, 2012

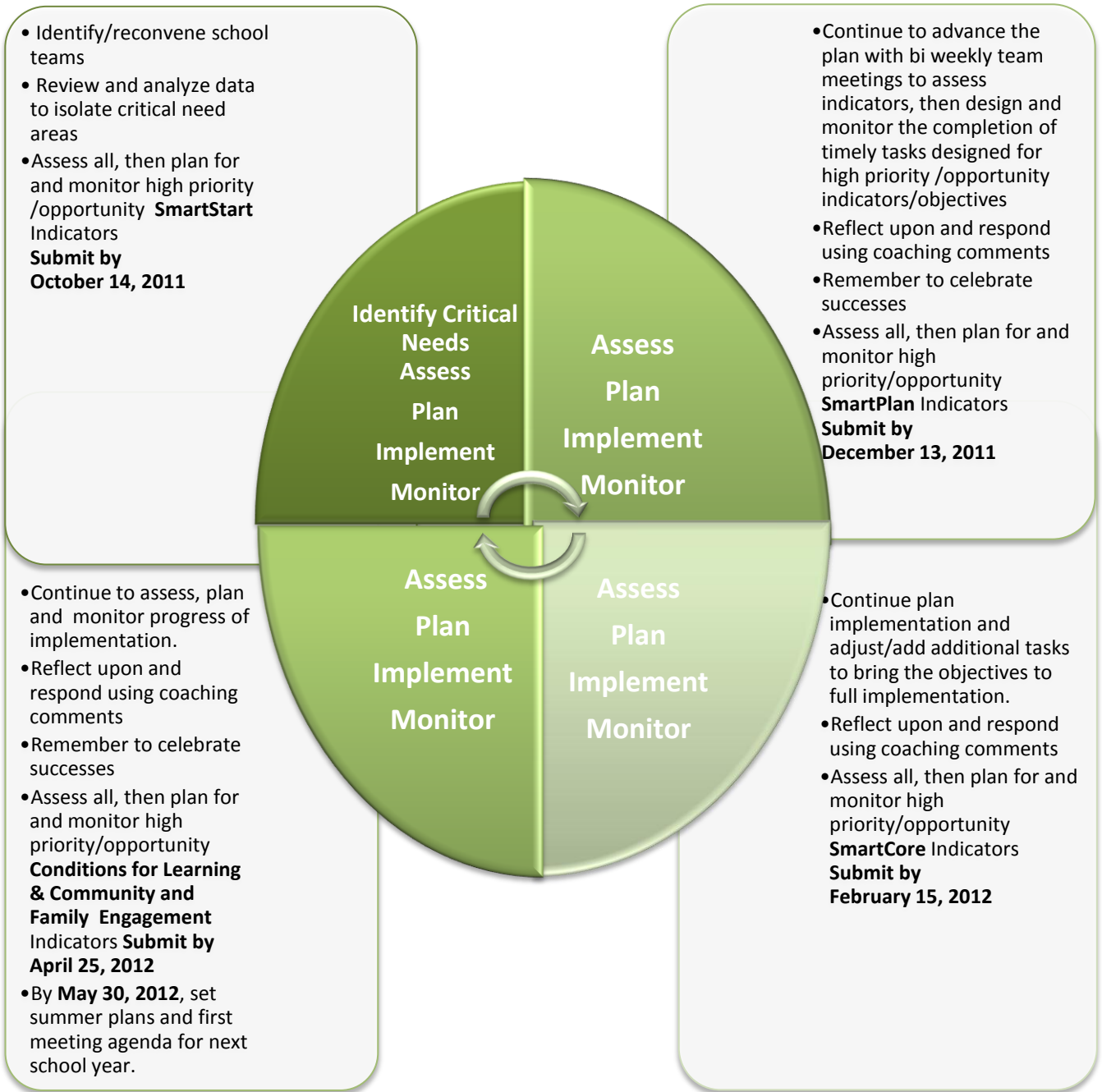
**Phase 4
SmartCheck**

**Phase 3
SmartAction**

**Illinois State Board of Education - Statewide System of Support
Continuous Improvement Framework for Schools Using *Rising Star***

**Phase 1
SmartStart**

**Phase 2
SmartPlan**



Pacing the Work (Dr. Sam Redding, 2011)

The Illinois Rising Star System includes 45 district indicators and 104 school indicators. The ultimate goal, of course, is for each indicator to be fully implemented. The Leadership Team may determine that an indicator is being fully implemented at two points in the system: (1) When the indicator is first assessed; or (2) After a plan has been completed to reach full implementation of the indicator (called an “objective” in the plan).

Assessing the Indicators

For our example, let’s assume that 20% of the indicators are known to be fully implemented at the time they are first assessed. That 20% of indicators, then, are not included in the plan. They will be re-assessed in two or three years (as determined by the state) when the system flags them for reassessment.

When an indicator is initially assessed as “fully implemented,” the team simply marks it as fully implemented and provides a paragraph to describe how it knows it is fully implemented—the evidence. The evidence relates directly and literally to this one indicator, nothing more. The evidence never says “we will,” because that means the evidence is not yet in hand. “We will” is a statement that is appropriate as a task in the plan.

With 104 indicators, we will assume that 21 will be determined “fully implemented” at the first assessment. To discuss one indicator and develop the evidence statement may take, on average, 15 minutes. So 5 ½ hours of meeting time.

When an indicator is assessed as No Development or Implementation, the Leadership Team determines whether it is of sufficient priority and interest to include in the plan. Nearly always, the answer is yes. When the answer is yes, the system asks the same questions that are asked if the indicator is assessed as Limited Development or Implementation: (1) what is the priority level and opportunity level for this indicator? (A way to prioritize which objectives are tackled first in the planning step in order to gain “quick wins.”); (2) How does the implementation look now? (A simple statement in a sentence or two); and (3) by what date should the objective be met? Again, this assessment process takes about 15 minutes for each indicator. Eighty-three indicators assessed at 15 minutes each—21 hours. Wow! This is taking some time. That is why we need to realistically pace the work.

Planning the Indicators

Eighty-three indicators to for which to plan, and plans often evolve over time. In other words, a few tasks may be created to meet an objective at first, but later more tasks added if the objective is not being met. What needs to be done (simple, practical steps likely to reach full implementation)? These are tasks, and each task is assigned to someone (anyone in the school) to complete, and a target date established. Let’s assume it takes 15 minutes to create tasks for an objective. Ready for this? Another 21 hours for planning.

Monitoring Progress

The Leadership Team monitors progress by simply checking off tasks that have been completed. When all of the tasks for an objective are completed, the system asks if the objective has been met. If it has, then the team shows its evidence. If the task has not been met, the team is instructed to add more tasks. Checking progress in task completion may take five minutes for each objective. Eighty-three objectives—7 hours. Providing the evidence may take another 10 minutes—13 hours. This is mounting up, isn't it? Another 20 hours of task checking and evidence writing.

Reality Check

The total Leadership Team time to assess, plan, and monitor the progress of 104 indicators is estimated at 67.5 hours. That's a full week and a half of work, spread over two or three years, or 14 to 20 hours a year (rounding the numbers now). That doesn't seem quite so daunting. If the Leadership Team meets for four hours a month, that is a manageable expectation.

Pacing the Work

So, should all the indicators be first assessed, and then all planned? Or should they be assessed and planned together in chunks? If they are all assessed at once, that would take a year. Then planning would take another year, and probably two years since the planning and progress monitoring take place simultaneously—as soon as tasks are set, the implementation work begins. It makes more sense, then, to assess and plan in chunks. That's where the state provides guidance by benchmarking how many indicators should be addressed at different points in time and showing the order in which they should be considered.

The teaming and leadership indicators are foundational—necessary before instructional planning and classroom delivery can really be addressed. States typically ask schools to work on the teaming and leadership indicators first, then instructional planning, and then classroom delivery.

In a three-year cycle, the pace would be to assess, plan, and monitor progress on about 35 indicators each year (rounding again). That is a comfortable pace. A two-year cycle is possible, with about 52 indicators a year. Still doable, but more challenging. Still, some schools seek rapid improvement.

The Good News

The good news is that the assessing, planning, and monitoring becomes less onerous after one cycle through the indicators. Why? Because when the indicators are re-assessed, most should be still fully implemented and not requiring further planning and monitoring. Just those feisty indicators are addressed now—the ones that slip away when our backs are turned and require more tasks to get back on track.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is, well, continuous. But the initial work is the most demanding—arriving at a good assessment of all the indicators of effective practice and working hard to bring them to full implementation. Sustaining the good work is important, and also continuous. The Leadership Team is “working on the work,” and that is part of the work. It is also invigorating, important, and professional work that might also be called “professional development.” The Leadership Team, and everyone in the school, learns a great deal by focusing on indicators of effective practice.

Rising Star Coaching Protocols

Prior to the Initial Rising Star Rising Star Team Meeting

The Coach's primary role is to build the capacity of the team to engage in a *continuous* improvement process.

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources/Tips
1- Letter of Notification	Coach confirms that ISBE Notification letter was received by District indicating Rising Star participation and that Coach will be contacting Superintendent	___ Confirm letter from ISBE was received by District	Copy of letter available from SSoS Coordinator who was cc'd on ISBE letter to District
2 -Background on District	<p>The Coach analyzes available data to become familiar with the assigned District</p> <p>The Coach obtains his/her District username and password for Rising Star and checks the functionality</p> <p>The Coach checks that the District has received all necessary passwords (Superintendent, Process Manager)</p>	<p>___ Review available data about District.</p> <p>___ Obtain from SSoS Coordinator the District User Name and Password</p> <p>___ Obtain from SSoS Coordinator the username and password for each district the Coach is working</p> <p>___ The Coach checks that the District has received all necessary passwords from the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District website • Interactive Illinois Report Card data • District/school profiles • Local District / school data <p>Note: Most recent AYP data may be embargoed for public release. The SSoS Coordinator may ask the District to share that data.</p>

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources/Tips
3-Initial District Contact	<p>The Coach contacts the District Superintendent / Designee to schedule a date and time for a face-to-face initial meeting with the Superintendent and other key individuals as determined by the Superintendent</p> <p><i>If district is new to corrective action and using Rising Star for the first time, the Coach will need to introduce him/herself and his/her roles and responsibilities. The Coach will need to provide background information on how a district enters the Federal Status of Corrective Action, explain the pathways and the Rising Star process.</i></p>	<p>___ Coach contacts District new to Corrective Action to introduce him/herself and his/her role in supporting the District using Rising Star</p> <p>___ Schedule a date for a face-to-face meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways for Districts in status: http://www.isbe.net/ayp/htmls/making_ayp.htm • Directions for District accessing its pathway document via IWAS • Districts in Corrective Action: http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/dist_corr_action_pres091010.pdf • Rising Star Operations Manual (ISBE) • Coaching for School Improvement (CII)
4-Regional or State Orientation Meeting	<p>Coach attends, along with District Superintendents and/or appropriate administrator, a regional or ISBE informational session familiarizing all attendees with the SSoS and its goals.</p> <p>If there is not a scheduled regional or state informational meeting, the Coach or regional SSoS Coordinator facilitates an informational session to familiarize District Superintendent and appropriate administrators with SSoS and its goals.</p>	<p>___ Attend regional SSoS Overview.</p>	

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources/Tips
5-Rising Star Face to Face Meeting with Superintendent	<p>During the first Rising Star face-to-face meeting with the Superintendent, the Coach clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the District as well as the Process Manager and team members</p> <p>The Coach asks the Superintendent to identify a Process Manager and team members ASAP.</p>	<p>___ Meet with Superintendent to clarify roles and responsibilities and identify Process Manager and team members</p>	<p>Operations Manual Coaching Manual</p>
6 –Follow Up District Meeting	<p>Within 1 week from the initial meeting with the Superintendent, the Coach holds a follow-up meeting with the Superintendent and/or identified Process Manager to complete/update Steps 1, 2 & 3 of Rising Star, and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule first Rising Star team meeting • Prepare for first Rising Star team meeting • Create the agenda for the first Rising Star team meeting. 	<p>___ Support District in completing/updating Steps 1, 2 & 3 of Rising Star.</p> <p>___ Become familiar with Rising Star website, resources and reports</p>	<p>Coaching Manual</p>

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources/Tips
7-Rising Star Team Meeting Agenda	The Coach assists the Superintendent and Process Manager in creating the first Rising Star meeting agenda on Rising Star through an initial review or revisit of the required then non required indicators to select which will be assessed/revisited at the initial meeting	___ Check to see that agenda has been created, and offer assistance if needed.	Online Rising Star agenda Coaching Manual
8-Support Process Manager	Prior to the first Rising Star team meeting, Coach may meet with Process Manager to orient that person to the Rising Star website.	___ As needed, provide support to ensure the Process Manager is conversant with Rising Star website functions and features.	Computer internet access to Rising Star
9-Agenda and Rising Star materials	Coach ensures that the Process Manager sends the agenda, and team selected Indicators with accompanying Wise Ways, to Rising Star team members at least 5 days before the Rising Star Team Meeting with request that team read the indicators and Wise Ways prior to the meeting	___ Check to see that agenda and indicators with accompanying Wise Ways have been sent out, and offer assistance if needed	Agenda Indicators with corresponding Wise Ways

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources/Tips
10-Review Indicators and Wise Ways	The Coach carefully reviews and highlights key concepts present in all indicators and Wise Ways to be used during the first Rising Star team meeting	___ Review and highlight key concepts in indicators and Wise Ways to be used during the meeting	Indicators with corresponding Wise Ways

Coaching Ongoing Rising Star District Meetings

Meeting Expectation: It is expected that the coach will attend all Rising Star team meetings. The recommended Rising Star meeting frequency is twice a month. Coaches will communicate weekly, as appropriate, with team leaders, members and/or Process Manager.

Prior to the Meeting

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources / Tips
1 - Pre-Meeting preparation	Three to seven days before the meeting, the Coach contacts the Team Leader and Process Manager to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer support • answer questions or concerns • remind him/her to distribute the agenda that was set by the Team and Rising Star 	___ Review the agenda ___ Offer any final assistance needed ___ Be familiar with the indicators, accompanying Wise Ways and Rising Star process so you can answer any questions or concerns	Indicators and Wise Ways to be assessed

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources / Tips
	Coach at the prior meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> remind him/her to send or otherwise make available copies of needed mtg resources (e.g., indicators and Wise Ways, task completion report, summary report, etc.) 		
2-Review meeting purpose, outcomes, norms, roles	The Coach ensures that prior to the meeting the Team Leader reviews Rising Star meeting norms, purpose, outcomes, decision making process, roles.	___ Contact Team Leader and offer assistance as needed	Coaching Manual – See section on effective meetings
3-Sign-In Forms	Immediately before the meeting, the Process Manager logs participant and guest attendance with a sign in sheet. The Coach retains a copy (or original if required by the Coordinator) of the attendance / sign-in sheet and ensures that a copy of the sign-in sheet is kept by the district. (Collect reimbursement	___ Collect and keep on file the sign-in sheet (and reimbursement forms for stipends and subs—if applicable.) ___ Turn in sign-in sheets and reimbursement forms to SSOS Area Coordinator, if applicable.	Sign in sheets

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources / Tips
	forms for stipends and substitutes—if applicable.)		

During the Meeting

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources / Tips
1– Review previous meeting minutes	The Team Leader reviews with the team the previous meeting’s minutes.	___ Review the previous meeting minutes on the RS website	Hard copy of minutes or computer view
2-Review agenda	The Team Leader presents and reviews with the team the Rising Star Agenda via hardcopy and/or projected on a screen	___ Review Agenda	Hard copy of agenda or project on screen
3-Review designated indicators	<p>The Team Leader facilitates the discussion of designated indicators and Wise Ways for each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 4 - Assess • Step 5 - Plan for implementation • Step 6 - Monitor progress toward completion of tasks and full 	___ Monitor, ask reflective questions, and offer assistance as needed	Coaching for School Improvement (pp. 64-65) Coaching Manual

	objective implementation		
4-Identify needs as related to fully implementing objectives	The Team identifies needs (e.g., further tasks, professional development and/ or other resources) needed to bring objectives to full implementation	<p>___ Check and offer assistance as needed</p> <p>___ Offer to provide resources to meet identified needs</p>	Run Summary report
5-Review existing task progress and where necessary, add additional tasks	The Team identifies and Process Manager enters into Rising Star new tasks (as necessary) to attain full implementation of Indicators.	___ Monitor, ask reflective questions, and ensure that tasks are likely to impact student achievement.	Step 5 worksheets
6-Evaluate progress	<p>During Step 6-Monitoring, when planned tasks have been completed, the Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluates progress toward fully implementing objectives • provides summary evidence for indicators/objectives viewed as fully • implemented 	___ Monitor, ask reflective questions, and ensure the tasks are likely to impact student achievement.	Step 6 worksheets

Suggested Sequence	Protocol	Action Checklist	Resources / Tips
7- Next steps	The Team identifies necessary actions/tasks and timelines to be taken prior to the next meeting.	___ Check and offer assistance as needed	
8-Wrap-Up	The Team Leader and/or Process Manager summarize work accomplished, actions taken and next steps.	___ Check, ask reflective questions as appropriate, and offer assistance as needed	Summary Report
9-Schedule next meeting	The Team and Rising Star Coach establish/review next meeting date and set agenda.	___ Make sure date and draft agenda is set prior to close of meeting.	Agenda worksheets

After the Meeting

Suggested Sequence	Action Steps	Actions To Complete	Resources / Tips
1 - Coaching Comments	<p>1 to 2 DAYS AFTER:</p> <p>The Coach drafts coaching comments and reviews/discusses them with a colleague to refine and create consistency in area wide coaching comments, prior to entering them into Rising Star.</p> <p>The Coach enters coaching comments into Rising Star 24-48 hours following the meeting.</p>	<p>___ Review coaching comments with colleague.</p> <p>___ Enter coaching comments into Rising Star.</p>	<p>Coaching for School Improvement, pp. 64-65.</p> <p>Tip – Type comments in a Word document first to check for spelling and grammatical errors before posting on Rising Star</p>
2- Confirm next meeting	<p>3-5 DAYS AFTER:</p> <p>The Coach contacts District Team Leader / Designee to review and clarify meeting agenda and outcomes next meeting.</p>	<p>___ Review next meeting agenda and outcomes with District Team Leader</p>	<p>Rising Star Agenda Coaching Manual</p>
3- Posting meeting minutes	<p>ONE WEEK AFTER:</p> <p>The Coach checks the Rising Star site one week after the meeting to ensure meeting minutes have been entered</p> <p>If the minutes have not been entered, Coach contacts Team Leader / Process Manager to see if assistance is needed</p>	<p>___ Check Rising Star website for minutes and offer assistance as needed</p>	<p>Coaching Manual for suggestions on coaching comment entries</p>

Suggested Sequence	Action Steps	Actions To Complete	Resources / Tips
4- Coaching Comment responses	The Coach checks Rising Star to see if responses to Coaching Comments have been posted. The Coach replies as appropriate.	___ Check Rising Star for responses to Coaching Comments and reply as appropriate	

Statewide System of Support (SSoS)
Scope of Work for Districts and School Improvement
(Red text indicates change for 2012)

	FY 2011	FY 2012
Goals	Assist Districts in Corrective Action and chronically low-performing schools to implement effective instructional strategies and best practices to improve student achievement.	Assist Districts in Corrective Action and chronically low-performing schools to implement effective instructional strategies and best practices to improve student achievement. <p style="text-align: center;">Focus Areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing a rigorous <i>curriculum</i> aligned to the New Illinois State Standards Incorporating the Common Core in math and English Language Arts (ELA). • Cultivating strong <i>instructional</i> practices aligned to the New Illinois State Standards Incorporating the Common Core in math and English Language Arts (ELA). • Analyzing <i>data</i> to inform strategic decision making around the 8 Essential Elements-Comprehensive Planning, Conditions for Learning, Community and Family, Professional Development, Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment <p>Build district capacity that allows for coaches to totally transition their work from school level to district level.</p>
Target Population	Title I Districts and Schools Districts in Corrective Action (CA) Schools within CA Districts in Restructuring Implementation, Restructuring Planning, Corrective Action, and School not making AYP for 3 years (Choice + SES) Any schools in Restructuring	<u>Districts Receiving Title I Funds</u> No New Schools will be added to receive SSoS services. Districts in Corrective Action (CA) Districts with schools in Restructuring Implementation, Restructuring Planning, Corrective Action, and School not making AYP for 3 years (Choice + SES)

	Implementation, Restructuring Planning, Corrective Action, and Choice + SES	Only those schools, previously served in FY 2011, which continue to remain in Restructuring Implementation, Restructuring Planning, Corrective Action, and Choice + SES
Roles	Coordinator Auditor and assessors Service providers for both district and school (<u>Coaches</u> and Trainers) Monitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Coordinator (10) • Statewide Professional Development Coordinators (3) • Area Experts in math, reading, data/ assessments whose work will address those Common Core elements • District/school coaches (approximately 150 statewide)
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District improvement planning using Rising Star • Use data to identify critical needs • Cultivate District/Building leadership team • Determine areas of need develop research-based strategies and action steps focused on critical needs identified • Assist with implementation noting intensive focus on curriculum and instruction • Monitor progress and correct implementation plan • Collaborate with regional partners to share and disseminate best practices • Determine level of readiness Assist with school improvement planning using Rising Star • Assist with the alignment of professional development activities • Support the design and delivery of job-embedded professional development • Provide intensive, ongoing on-site coaching • Provide sustained and intensive site based assistance from RESPRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate continuous improvement planning using Rising Star • Use data to identify critical needs • Cultivate District/Building leadership team • Determine areas of need related to curriculum, instruction and assessment and develop research-based strategies and actions to address needs • Assist with implementation of research based strategies noting intensive focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment/data • Monitor progress and correct implementation plan • Collaborate with regional partners to share and disseminate best practices • Assist with the development of professional learning communities For schools not previously eligible to participate in RISING STAR, but wishing to do so, mentor district identified internal coaches on how to independently implement the RISING STAR continuous improvement process.

	improvement teams	
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other RESPROs RESPRO Coordinator - 1 FTE All other staff at least .50 % of time dedicated to RESPRO work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other SSoSs, ROEs and ISCs Area Coordinator - 1 FTE Area Experts – 1 FTE All other staff at least .50 % of time dedicated to SSoS work.
Accountability Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School’s Trend Report results • Decrease in students being suspended • Decrease in student drop-out rate • Increase in students graduating on-time • Increase in student attendance • Increase in students meeting proficiency in math and reading on the Illinois State Assessment • Improvement in student progress on formative assessments that are frequent and timely • Data points that inform teachers about the effectiveness of their instruction • Reduction of inappropriate referrals for special education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District’s Trend Reports • Decrease in students being suspended • Decrease in student drop-out rate • Increase in students graduating on-time • Increase in student attendance • Increase in students meeting proficiency in math and reading on the Illinois State Assessment • Improvement in student progress on formative assessments that are frequent and timely • Data points that inform teachers about the effectiveness of their instruction • Reduction of inappropriate referrals for special education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in the number of students requiring intensive and/or specialized supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in the number of students requiring intensive and/or specialized supports• 3 to 5 SSoS area selected progress indicators related ELA, math, assessment and data driven decision making
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