

**Rubric for
Implementation Components of School Excellence**

1. Embrace a Common Vision and Goals – Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships for All Students.
Schools, like any organization that seeks to improve, must have a common vision shared by all. Everyone must be committed to shared goals to measure success, and staff must have the same perspective as to what it important in the organization.

Prior to completing this portion of checklist, please review and reflect on:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Administrator interview | School observation |
| Staff interviews | Classroom observation |
| Teacher survey | Student work analysis |
| Parent focus group interviews | School improvement plan and reports |
| Student focus group interviews | School practices analysis |
| Curriculum processes | |

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. References to high student expectations for rigor, relevance, and relationships appear in vision and mission statements of the school.					
2. The belief is reflected in student and teacher handbooks.					
3. The belief is evident among school personnel, with no apparent dissenters.					
4. The belief is evident in conversations with students.					
5. Students have a clear and ambitious picture of what they will do in the future.					
6. Students know and understand the meaning of high-quality work.					
7. The need for high student expectations for rigor, relevance, and relationships is communicated to parents and community in newsletters, reports, and school policies; at school events and parent conferences; and on the school’s Web site.					
8. The school’s emphasis on learning is reflected in the displays, posted materials, and awards within the building.					
9. The school is designed to promote sustained student relationships with adults.					
10. The schedule is designed to promote sustained student relationships with adults.					
11. Students have an adult advocate and a personal plan for progress.					
12. Staff are dedicated to helping all students meet state and local standards.					
13. Students perceive staff as caring and concerned with their education achievement.					
14. Conditions and personnel in the school are inviting and welcoming, which encourages and supports parental involvement.					
15. All staff members, including bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, and office personnel, are seen as contributors to achieving the mission of the school.					
16. The culture of the school includes celebration of both student and faculty achievement.					
17. All students are regularly encouraged to do their best work and to “go the extra mile.” Extra effort is encouraged and rewarded.					
18. The school has in place specific strategies for ensuring all staff have high expectations for each and every student					

Comments:

2. Inform Decisions through Data Systems. Whole-school/district reform is a continuous process guided by a well-developed data structure based on multiple measures of student learning. Highly successful schools/districts use quality data to make laser-like decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

Administrator Interview
Classroom Observation
Student Performance Data
Available Data Sources

Staff Interviews
Curriculum Review
School Improvement Plan and Reports
School Practices Analysis

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. There are measurable goals tied to the school vision.					
2. The staff has identified a few important priorities that serve as a common focus throughout the school.					
3. There is a willingness to explore ways to use data to measure progress.					
4. The school collects data to determine the amount of high-rigor/high-relevance instruction...					
5. The school has data on student performance related to students' goals.					
6. Data is used to highlight gaps that exist between student performance and real-world expectations.					
7. The school examines data for all appropriate subgroups to measure success of all students.					
8. Student achievement data is used to plan staff development.					
9. Student achievement data is used to recognize teacher and staff performance.					
10. Assessment data is provided to parents and students in a form they understand and to teachers in a format that can be used to make informed instructional decisions.					
11. The school regularly reviews data to develop school improvement plans and to monitor progress.					
12. The school looks for trends in data over time.					
13. The school collects and uses follow-up data on student satisfaction and success beyond school.					
14. The school uses multiple indicators, including student work, to analyze student performance, not just one set of test scores.					
15. The school prepares reports that celebrate student and faculty achievements and communicate school goals.					
16. Student literacy levels are measured continuously and this data is compared to literacy achievement goals.					
17. The school conducts satisfaction surveys with parents and community.					
18. The school conducts focus groups for parents and community members.					
19. The school tracks data on parent involvement and has specific goals to increase parent involvement and support.					
20. State tests are seen as the beginning line, not the finish line.					
21. School success is measured by indicators beyond the state test.					
22. The school has developed a report card that reports student learning results in areas of student engagement, stretch, and personal skill development.					

Comments:

3. Empower Leadership Teams to Take Action and Innovate. Schools that will be most successful in the 21st century are led by individuals who possess skills and attitudes to take action rather than defend the status quo. Leadership does not reside in a single position but reflects the attributes, skills, and attitudes of the many staff members who take action and improve through effective learning communities.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Administrator interview | School practices analysis |
| Staff interviews | Available data sources |
| Parent focus group interviews | School improvement plan and reports |
| Student focus group interviews | Student performance data |
| Classroom observation | Student assessment analysis |
| Curriculum review | Student work analysis |

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. The principal assumes, but shares, responsibility for all phases of school operations as well as relations within the school, with the school district, and with the community.					
2. School staff feel that leadership provides clear direction and adequate support in helping to achieve school goals.					
3. A strong collaborative relationship exists between the administration and the leadership of the teachers' union.					
4. Adults in the school share meaningful feedback and suggestions for improving their work.					
5. The adults believe they have a responsibility to help set the tone for student behavior and create an atmosphere of high expectations					
6. Many teachers are involved in decisions that impact the entire school, not just their individual classrooms.					
7. The faculty and administration demonstrate effective teamwork and leadership.					
8. The administration uses leadership teams, advisory groups, and community representatives to gather information and share goals.					
9. Administration demonstrates that student achievement is a priority by their actions and use of resources to support it.					
10. Administration uses technology (media, newsletters, public service announcements) to communicate the mission of the school to students, faculty, and community.					
11. Current leaders are actively involved in recruiting and mentoring future leaders.					
12. Administrator evaluations are based on student achievement.					
13. Teacher evaluations are based on student achievement.					
14. The school actively seeks and involves parents on advisory committees for the purpose of school improvement.					
15. Administrators and teachers are active in the community.					
16. Leaders actively participate with staff in ongoing professional development					
17. Acquiring/developing a high-quality staff is considered the most important factor related to student achievement.					
18. The professional development program is aligned with the instructional improvement plan.					
19. Teachers and administrators have individual improvement plans.					
20. Faculty teamwork is a "way of life" in the school.					
21. Available resources are discussed to determine the appropriate uses to meet the goals and mission of the school					

Comments:

4. Clarify Student Learning Expectations. Inconsistent state standards, tests, and community expectations create a wide-ranging and jumbled assortment of curricula, instructional practices, and classroom materials, as well as varying expectations for rigor within and across grade levels. When districts take steps to clarify what students are expected to learn, they meet with success in improving student achievement.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

Administrator interview
 Staff interviews
 Classroom observation
 Curriculum review
 Student work analysis

Student assessment analysis
 Student performance data
 School practices analysis
 Curriculum processes

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. A process is in place to design and update curriculum based on analyses of state standards, assessments, and local priorities.					
2. There is agreement among teachers about the academic skills and knowledge to be taught.					
3. Common rubrics have been designed and are used across disciplines in such areas as writing, research projects, demonstrations, problem solving, and decision making.					
4. There is evidence that all teachers, regardless of subject area, take responsibility for delivering high-priority academic skills and knowledge.					
5. Literacy development is addressed in all disciplines.					
6. Instruction is aligned with curriculum and state and local assessments.					
7. Curriculum topics are sequenced. There is a schoolwide delivery plan.					
8. Faculty work together to create learning experiences that are challenging, allowing students to think independently and extend their knowledge.					
9. Learning experiences relate to problems or situations connected to the world beyond school.					
10. Learning experiences allow students to become actively engaged in tasks that lead directly to learning objectives.					
11. Faculty share techniques/strategies that successfully differentiate learning for students functioning at different literacy levels.					
12. The process used by teachers to develop instructional plans is consistent across the school.					
13. Students and parents agree on academic expectations.					
14. The school has developed a consistent approach to ensuring that all students have full access to the general education curriculum.					
15. The curriculum focus is competence, not coverage.					
16. The school assessment program is based on district and state standards.					
17. The school uses data to align curriculum both vertically across grades and horizontally across subjects.					

Comments:

5. Adopt Effective Instructional Practices. More than high test scores, successful instructional practices include having a wide range of strategies and tools to meet the needs of diverse learners in all disciplines and grade levels. Success in achieving state standards results from not teaching in routine and proscriptive methods but from selecting successful instructional practices to meet the needs of all students.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Administrator interview | School observation |
| Staff interviews | Classroom observation |
| Teacher survey | Curriculum review |
| Parent focus group interviews | Student work analysis |
| Student focus group interviews | Student assessment analysis |
| Curriculum processes | |

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. There is a strong focus on teaching the application of content knowledge to real-world situations through class and individual projects, hands-on activities, and various methods of communication.					
2. Faculty regularly review instructional practices and makes modifications to make them more relevant.					
3. Students understand the purpose of instruction and how skills and knowledge can be applied.					
4. A good portion of student work is analytical – research papers, projects, demonstrations, experiments, and extended writing.					
5. Faculty work together in interdisciplinary teams to create learning experiences linked to high-priority standards that focus on the application of knowledge in real-world settings.					
6. The school uses community resources to bring relevancy to the instructional programs.					
7. Students are typically asked to present their work to their peers.					
8. Faculty uses strategies to connect learning to students’ experiences and previous learning.					
9. Students work collaboratively in groups.					
10. Assessment practices are rich and include a variety of performance measures, such as portfolios, projects, peer reviews, and presentations.					
11. Teachers regularly demonstrate how to apply learning and use real-world examples.					
12. Internships and/or community service projects are a major focus of the instructional program.					
13. Community representatives participate as advisors, mentors, and reactors to student work.					
14. Teachers employ innovative, active, and effective instructional practices.					
15. Teachers have time, opportunities, and incentives to reflect critically and analytically on what they are teaching, not teaching, and why.					
16. The school has a process to share best practices of faculty throughout the school (study circles, peer reviews, etc.).					
17. All students, regardless of ability, have opportunities identified in the curriculum to engage in higher order thinking skills and problem-solving tasks.					
18. Students also take an active role in the professional learning community by sharing knowledge and teaching others.					
19. Teachers use grading practices that promote high levels of student engagement and achievement.					
20. Instruction is personalized through differentiation strategies, attention to student needs and progress, attention to learning styles, and respect for student diversity.					
21. Faculty receive reading levels of students and review the reading levels reflected in their textbooks.					
22. Instruction demonstrates that textbooks are used to support learning rather than as a “cookbook.”					
23. Literacy is an important priority throughout the school.					
24. Pretesting and other data is used as a tool to individualize instruction.					

Comments:

6. Adapt Organizational Structures. Organizational structure should be determined by instructional needs. Only after a comprehensive review of instructional practices should schools begin to address issues of organization such as school schedules, use of time, unique learning opportunities, school calendars, and physical structure.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Administrator interview | School observation |
| Staff interviews | Classroom observation |
| Teacher survey | Curriculum review |
| Parent focus group interviews | Student work analysis |
| Student focus group interviews | School practices analysis |
| Curriculum processes | |

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. Teachers know their students very well (examples: teachers attend after school events, have lunch with students, make it a practice to call students' homes, and are involved with advisement/mentoring programs).					
2. Special programs and structures are in place to ensure the successful transition of students into and out of high school.					
3. Applied academic programs have been developed based on student needs and interests.					
4. It is common practice, supported by the school schedule and structure, to vary amounts of instructional time and resources to accommodate differing student needs to achieve proficiency.					
5. Surveys are used to learn about student interests.					
6. Students have choices and options regarding their learning.					
7. The school is organized around the needs of students.					
8. Media centers and study labs are readily available to all students.					
9. Technology is used effectively as a tool to differentiate instruction and as a resource for all students.					
10. Organized extracurricular organizations and athletics provide adequate opportunities for students to develop interests and abilities, in addition to academic achievement.					
11. School policy goes beyond "open door" to "open heart" in inviting parents and interested community members to play an active role in the education process.					
12. The school seeks ways to increase community participation in the life of the school (free admissions, coupons, senior discounts, volunteer opportunities, a nonprofit 501(c) (3) education foundation, etc.).					
13. Faculty and administrators have the belief that educating students is more effective when parents understand and buy into the principles upon which the school operates.					
14. The use of faculty time and resources reflects the school's emphasis on development of literacy skills and independent learners.					
15. The school has taken steps to make the media center, athletic facilities, and other school facilities available to the community when possible.					
16. School's programs are supported by parent/community booster clubs.					
17. Any small learning communities are organized around student needs and given autonomy to meet those needs.					
18. Multiple pathways to achievement are provided to give students options that allow for variations in time for students to be successful.					
19. Any career academies are designed on sound practices including community partnerships, incorporation of academics, and preparation for all levels of continuing education and careers.					

Comments:

7. Monitor Progress/Improve Support Systems. Highly successful programs recognize the need to monitor student progress on a regular basis. Successful schools use formative assessments in an organized, deliberate, and ongoing fashion to monitor student progress. Further, they use this data immediately to adjust instructional practices and intervene to meet student needs.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

Administrator interview
Teacher survey
School practices analysis

Staff interviews
School improvement plan and reports
Curriculum processes

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. Root causes of obstacles to student achievement have been identified and serve as topics for staff development.					
2. Professional development programs are routinely evaluated and modified accordingly.					
3. The school uses a variety of resources and strategies to help parents understand the standards, assessments, and academic achievement requirements for students.					
4. Teachers are encouraged to communicate regularly with parents in writing, by phone, and in person concerning student success and needs.					
5. No excuses are accepted for students not being successful. Unmet expectations are seen as a problem that can and must be corrected.					
6. Additional time, resources, and other interventions are available to students not meeting expectations.					
7. The school uses a variety of rubrics as often as applicable so that students know what quality work looks like.					
8. Student progress is monitored frequently with formal and informal assessments.					
9. Student progress reports are regularly shared with students and parents.					
10. Faculty members meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual students.					
11. Advisement/mentoring programs are available to all students and help identify students who are at risk of not meeting expectations.					
12. Pretesting in classrooms is used often to ensure that students are consistently challenged but not overwhelmed.					
13. Academic intervention services are prescribed immediately when a student does not meet expectations rather than next year.					
14. The principal, other administrators, and/or teachers visit parents at home and/or through community agencies.					
15. A comprehensive plan sets the priority for use of funds for instructional improvement, teacher evaluation, and professional development.					
16. Counseling services are readily available to all students.					
17. A data-driven, consistent, schoolwide intervention system is in place for struggling learners.					
18. All students have access to content through resources, materials, supplemental information and support.					

Comments:

8. Refine Process on an Ongoing Basis. High-performing schools realize that success is a continuing and ever-changing course of action. This step in the process, in fact, should reinvigorate the process and cause school leaders to look at new and emerging challenges and explore potential solutions and successful practices from around the country.

Prior to completing this portion of the checklist, please review and reflect on:

Administrator interview
 Staff interviews
 Teacher survey

Parent focus group interviews
 School improvement plan and reports
 School practices analysis

	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. School leaders look at new and emerging challenges and explore potential solutions from around the country.					
2. School improvement is ongoing and driven by student needs.					
3. The school actively researches best practices on an ongoing basis.					
4. Staff is engaged regularly in discussions to understand and reflect on the need for continuous improvement.					
5. The school has a well-organized school improvement team that meets regularly throughout the year.					
6. Systems are in place to collect feedback on school programs from students, teachers, parents, and community members.					
7. Professional development is ongoing and an important part of the school's culture.					

Comments:

Summary

Component	Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent
1. Embrace a Common Vision and Goals – Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships for All Students. Schools, like any organization that seeks to improve, must have a common vision shared by all. Everyone must be committed to shared goals to measure success, and staff must have the same perspective as to what it is important in the organization.					
2. Inform Decisions through Data Systems. Whole-school/district reform is a continuous process guided by a well-developed data structure based on multiple measures of student learning. Highly successful schools/districts use quality data to make laser-like decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.					
3. Empower Leadership Teams to Take Action and Innovate. Schools that will be most successful in the 21 st century are led by individuals who possess skills and attitudes to take action rather than defend the status quo. Leadership does not reside in a single position but reflects the attributes, skills, and attitudes of the many staff members who take action and improve through effective learning communities.					
4. Clarify Student Learning Expectations. Inconsistent state standards, tests, and community expectations create a wide-ranging and jumbled assortment of curricula, instructional practices, and classroom materials as well as varying expectations for rigor within and across grade levels. When districts take steps to clarify what students are expected to learn, they meet with success in improving student achievement.					
5. Adopt Effective Instructional Practices. More than high test scores, successful instructional practices include having a wide range of strategies and tools to meet the needs of diverse learners in all disciplines and grade levels. Success in achieving state standards results from not teaching in routine and proscriptive methods but from selecting successful instructional practices to meet the needs of all students.					
6. Adapt Organizational Structures. Organizational structure should be determined by instructional needs. Only after a comprehensive review of instructional practices should schools begin to address the issues of organization such as school schedules, use of time, unique learning opportunities, school calendars, and physical structure.					
7. Monitor Progress/Improve Support Systems. Highly successful programs recognize the need to monitor student progress on a regular basis. Successful schools use formative assessments in an organized, deliberate, and ongoing fashion to monitor student progress. Further, they use this data immediately to adjust instructional practices and intervene to meet student needs.					
8. Refine Process on an Ongoing Basis. High-performing schools realize that success is a continuing and ever-changing course of action. This step in the process, in fact, should reinvigorate the process and cause school leaders to look at new and emerging challenges and explore potential solutions and successful practices from around the country.					

