



## NH Schools Using Steps to Success

February, 2012

### Step 5: Creating an Action Plan

The previous guidance document, *Moving from Assess to Plan*, provided suggestions for taking the results of your assessment of your current practices using the indicators of effective practice and beginning to craft a plan for improvement. The recommended sequence included:

- check your work to be certain you've identified the most critical factors that influence the academic outcomes of the students in your school
- cluster similar indicators and re-prioritize to select the "main idea" indicators/objectives and the "supporting details"
- write a goal statement that defines the core elements that will be the focus of your improvement plan – the practices described in the indicators that you identified as the top priority for change.

This document will provide suggestions for completing **Step 5: Create the Plan**, for your priority indicators. (Note: once you move into Step 5, 'indicators' are slightly rephrased and stated as 'objectives.' Objectives are the near term targets that, when completed, will achieve the overarching goal of improved student achievement.)

When you've selected the objectives that will be the target of your change efforts, log into *Steps* system and

- select Plan your Meeting in the yellow box in the upper right of the School Main page.
- select Worksheets from the dropdown menu
- select Steps 4, 5, 6 Assess, Plan, Monitor
- locate your chosen objective from the list
- select the PLAN worksheet for that indicator

A new window will open and offer you the option of exporting  the worksheet in PDF or WORD or printing the blank worksheet. Choose your preference and bring a copy of the PLAN worksheets for your priority indicator(s) to your team meeting.

Here's one example starting from Goal to Objective to Tasks so you can visualize how to complete an action plan for each of your priority objectives. When ready to submit your plan, you will create a report within the *Steps* system to attach to your cover pages and other required documents.

**Example 1:**

**GOAL: To improve student achievement in reading and mathematics by ensuring that all students experience a guaranteed curriculum aligned with state standards.**

***Objectives (Indicators) –***

IIA02 Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.

IIIA07 All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.

IIIC05: All teachers use a variety of instructional modes.

Three objectives will form the core of this school's improvement plan: IIA02, IIIA07 and IIIC05. The school will create an ACTION PLAN for each of these three objectives that, when fully and effectively implemented, will lead to the GOAL of ensuring "that all student experience a guaranteed curriculum aligned with state standards."

Below is an example of an action plan for objective IIA02. You can find examples of several other objectives for Mt. Adams Elementary School by logging in to the *Steps to Success (Indistar)* system using this login: *nhsample/nhsample*.

**I. Start with the End in Mind**

Step 5: Create the Plan starts with the end in mind. The first three questions (*see excerpt from the plan worksheet for IIA02, below*) you and your team need to answer include

- assigning a person to manage the objective, someone on your improvement team who will take charge of tracking whether the activities described in the plan are taking place;
- describing what it will look like in your school when the objective is fully met, and
- setting a target date for full implementation (typically at the end of the school year)

The greatest benefit to your planning process will come from taking sufficient time to develop a clear and complete vision for what the objective will look like when fully met. Spend time discussing with your colleagues what a visitor might see in a year when you have fully enacted this objective. The clearer and more specific your response to Question 2 the easier it will be to devise activities (TASKS) to reach that vision.

In the discussion, specify what teachers will be doing, what administrators and support staff will be doing, and, most importantly, how the student learning experience will be different. The response to this question states your "theory of action" – i.e., the mechanism by which the goal of 'improved student achievement' will come about.

**IIA02 Plan Worksheet: excerpt**

<b>School name</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Category:</b> Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning	
<b>Section:</b> Engaging teachers in aligning instruction with standards and benchmarks	
<b>IIA02 - Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery. (89)</b>	
<b>Plan</b>	
1. Assign a team member to manage and monitor your work toward this objective. _____	
2. Describe how it will look when this objective is fully met. Also describe the information you will need to provide evidence that this objective is fully met.	
3. Establish a date by which your description above will be a reality. ____ / ____ / _____	

Here’s an example of what **Mt. Adams Elementary School** described for IIA02:

**Objective IIA02 - Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery. (89)**

<b>Plan</b>	Assigned to:	Mary Ellen Lafreniere
	How it will look when fully met	When fully implemented, teachers will make daily use of a document that lists grade level standards to plan their lessons. Grade level instructional teams will develop a sequence guide to lay out a yearlong plan, with monthly review and adjustment as needed depending on the particular students in the grade. Grade level instructional teams (and graduate students from the university nearby) will use Performance Plus and Assessment Builder to create pre- and post-tests using NECAP released items to complement the student performance results from classroom assessments.
	Target Date:	06/30/2013

## II. Define the TASKS (activities)

Once you've described what the staff and students in your school will be doing when this objective is fully accomplished, you should have a clear sense of the TASKS that must be tackled in order to achieve that vision of success. In this section of the *Steps* system, NH schools have some special instructions to follow. See the worksheet blank excerpt here to see the TASK sections:

### Tasks

*T-1.* Create a series of tasks that will lead to full implementation of this objective. Be sure to include tasks for gathering and analyzing the information needed to show evidence of full implementation.

---

T-1a. Assign a person to be responsible for this task. \_\_\_\_\_

T-1b. Establish a date this task will be completed. \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

T-1c. Record notes from your discussion that will be helpful to the person responsible for this task.

---

If you're familiar with the template for NH SINI plans, you'll recognize some of these questions. In *Steps to Success*, TASKS will be the activities you would have described in the standard NH SINI plan template. In the NH template, you had to assign a person responsible and a target date for completion of the activity (TASK) (*\*note – tasks (activities) will have short term targets, since they represent the progress benchmarks that demonstrate movement toward completion of the full objective, which in turn will contribute to the even longer term overarching GOAL.*)

TASKS are where you can address the specific *areas for which you have been identified for improvement*. For instance, **Mt. Adams School** noticed that teachers working with educationally disadvantaged students are not addressing the same standards based objectives as the teachers working with the general population. The Mt Adams team determined that this factor may be contributing to some of the gaps in student achievement.

In their plan for Objective IIA02, the team included in its TASKS explicit reminders that resource teachers and special educators would participate in developing the topic, concept and skills sequence for the year.

Here's what **Mt. Adams Elementary School** entered for one of its **TASKS** for IIA02:

Tasks		
	1. Grade level instructional teams will include special educators and resource teachers. These teams will establish a work plan for the year that lays out the sequence of topics/ concepts/ skills to be addressed in reading and mathematics. Unified arts teachers will identify what topics/ concepts/ skills they will reinforce in their classes.	
	Assigned to:	Grade level team leaders
	Target Completion Date:	11/01/2012
	Comments:	RESOURCES: binders for each teacher; GLE lists by grade level; curriculum materials for each subject, grade; performance plus "refresher" training as needed
		MONITORING ACTIVITIES: The leadership team (all grade level team leaders) will report their progress at monthly meetings, asking and offering advice for groups having difficulty finishing the map.
		MONITORING IMPACT: Administrators will report clearer references to GLEs in teachers' lesson plans. Post-test results will reflect consistent gains in learning on the targeted GLE topics/ skills/ concepts for each unit.

Also notice three items in the COMMENTS section. These three items are not integrated into the *Steps to Success* system and will need to be entered by NH schools as part of their TASKS:

- RESOURCES – what materials, money, time, expertise will be needed for this TASK?
- MONITORING ACTIVITIES – what evidence will you collect, when and how often to know that the TASK is being completed?
- MONITORING IMPACT – what evidence will you collect, when and how often to know whether the TASK is having its desired impact (on student learning, on teacher skill or knowledge, on instructional practice, e.g.)?

**NOTE:** This is only ONE step toward the vision of what it will look like when this objective is “fully implemented.” **Mt. Adams’** action plan includes two more TASKS for this objective.

Tasks		
	2. Instructional teams will divide the responsibility for compiling GLE-specific assessment items for each instructional unit among the members. the duties will be fairly distributed across the grade level.	
	Assigned to:	Grade level team members
	Target Completion Date:	12/30/2012
	Comments:	RESOURCES: reliable access to Performance Plus; meeting time.
		MONITORING ACTIVITIES: Grade level team leaders will report progress at the monthly Leadership Team meetings. Discussion will appear in LT minutes.
		MONITORING IMPACT: Teachers will report increased opportunities for sharing classroom assessment resources. Unified Arts lessons will show references to relevant instructional standards.

<b>Tasks</b>		
	3. Instructional teams will agree on a procedure for a common pre-test for a particular unit, and agree on instructional activities, and a date for common post-test on the unit. Instructional teams will discuss among themselves the results of the instructional activities and revise/ refine for next year's team	
	Assigned to:	Grade level team leaders
	Target Completion Date:	03/01/2013
	Comments:	RESOURCES: binders for each teacher with copies of pre-test items, instructional activities (links to existing curriculum materials), and post-test items
		MONITORING ACTIVITIES: Grade level team leaders will report progress and results at the monthly leadership team meeting. Meeting agendas will be available for all to review.
		MONITORING IMPACT/ EFFECTIVENESS: Teachers will report greater gains in pre-post results than prior years. Administrators report clearer links between daily lesson plans and specific GLEs. Students can describe the purpose of a lesson and what they are expected to learn from the lesson.

### **III. Repeat for Each of the Priority Objectives**

Once you and your team have completed a plan for your first priority objective, repeat the process with each of the other priority objectives that constitute your improvement plan. Begin with the *Plan Worksheet* and engage the group in discussion of question 2, what it will look like when the objective is fully implemented.

Your completed **ACTION PLAN** will consist of the plans you create in Step 5 for all of the PRIORITY OBJECTIVES you selected. Details on compiling an improvement plan are included in the next guidance document, *Submitting a Plan*.

#### **A Few More Suggestions:**

1. For each GOAL, aim for no more than 3 or 4 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES. Some minor objectives in your cluster can become TASKS within one of the major PRIORITY OBJECTIVES.
2. Aim for 2 to 5 TASKS for each PRIORITY OBJECTIVE. Keep a moderate level of detail. You can develop more detailed "work plans" when you begin implementation.
3. Use the INDICATOR CHECKLIST REPORT to produce reports for the specific indicators in your plan. Other reports, like the Comprehensive Plan Report, include *all* the indicators you assessed, whereas the INDICATOR CHECKLIST REPORT details *only those you selected as PRIORITY*.