

New Hampshire Department of Education



Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

For Non-Title I Schools Entering In Need of Improvement Status for School Years 2007-08 and 2008-09

As required by NH RSA 193-H and Federal Law 107-110 for Schools in Need of Improvement

August 2007

**Dr. Lyonel B. Tracy, Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Education
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Concord, NH 03301
www.ed.state.nh.us**

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STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Required Content

New Hampshire's school performance and accountability law (NH RSA 193-H) requires the development of a two-year improvement plan by any school officially designated as a school in need of improvement. The plan must describe, at a minimum:

- (1) the area(s) in which the school did not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years, resulting in the designation as a school in need of improvement;

AND

- (2) the activities the school will implement to address and improve the underlying issues most likely affecting student achievement in the designated area(s).

Required Focus

Many schools and districts engage in strategic planning for school improvement. Such plans are often broad in scope, encompassing categorical initiatives such as professional development, technology, or school safety. In contrast with broader strategic plans, the school improvement plan must be specifically focused on goals and strategies directly related to improving student achievement in the areas in which the school did not make adequate yearly progress.

Duration of the Plan

The improvement plan is in effect for a period of two years (2007-08 and 2008-09 school years). The designation as a school in need of improvement is removed once the school has made adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years in the area(s) that caused the designation.

Review and Approval Process.

State law requires the Commissioner of Education to submit school improvement plans to the State Board of Education for approval. The plan must therefore be written with minimal education jargon to ensure that reviewers, as well as the communities served by the school, can clearly understand what the school proposes to do, when, and why. **See Appendix B** for the criteria reviewers will use to review the plans.

Annual Progress Report

State law requires an annual progress review of schools in school improvement status. The law states: "...On or before the one-year anniversary of being designated as a school or school district in need of improvement, the commissioner shall designate a progress review team to evaluate the implementation of the improvement plans and the progress towards state performance targets. The progress review team shall deliver a report to the state board..." As one component of the progress review to be conducted by the Department, identified schools must submit an annual progress report.

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS (continued)

Deadline for Submission

In accordance with state and federal law, improvement plans must be completed within 90 days of the school's official designation as a school in need of improvement.

Completed plans must be received at the NH Department of Education by

4:30 p.m. on January 3, 2008

Submit the plan via e-mail to:

**Gary Guzouskas
Bureau of Accountability
NH Department of Education
GGuzouskas@ed.state.nh.us
Tel (603) 271-5873**

Technical Assistance

The Department will provide an informational workshop on Wednesday, September 19, 2007 to review the plan format and address questions. Specific details will be forwarded to Superintendents.

Inquiries should be directed to:

**Gary Guzouskas
Bureau of Accountability
NH Department of Education
GGuzouskas@ed.state.nh.us
Tel (603) 271-5873**

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Recommended Planning Process

The planning process described in **Appendix A** is based on a synthesis of effective schools research. Utilizing such research-based processes increases the likelihood that the resulting improvement plan will be based on an analysis of relevant student achievement data, and will include strategies to address key issues or conditions that may be contributing to gaps in student achievement. School teams are therefore encouraged to review the steps outlined in Appendix A as one approach for developing the plan.

Organizing the Plan

Organize the completed plan in the following sequence:

- Cover Page. Use the format provided on Page 4.
- Plan Abstract. In two pages or less, provide the information requested on Page 5.
- Memorandum of Understanding. Use the format provided on Page 6. An original signed document must be included.
- School Demographic Information. Use the format provided on Page 7.
- Plan Development and Monitoring. Provide all information requested on Page 9.
- Improvement Plan. Follow the instructions on Pages 8 and use the matrix provided on Page 10 to describe the goals, objectives, and proposed activities the school will implement to address the “root cause” issues affecting student achievement in the area(s) in which the school is identified for improvement.

Formatting the Plan

- Use the forms provided in this document to provide the requested information;
- Type all information (except for signatures), using a font size no smaller than 10;
- Number all pages, except for the cover page; and
- Spell out the name of a selected program or strategy once before using abbreviations or acronyms, to assist reviewers in understanding the plan.



Cover Page

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

For Non-Title I Schools Entering In Need of Improvement Status for School Years 2007-08 and 2008-09

As required by NH RSA 193-H and Federal Law 107-110 for Schools in Need of Improvement

SAU#:

District Name:

School Name:

Address:

City:

Zip:

Principal:

Tel:

Fax:

E-mail:

Contact person if different from Principal:

Name:

Title:

Address:

City:

Zip:

Tel:

Fax:

E-mail:

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

IMPROVEMENT PLAN ABSTRACT

Instructions: In two pages or less, provide an abstract of the plan that

- a) describes key characteristics of the school and school district, including the number of schools in the district, grade levels, enrollment, and the communities the school serves;
- b) identifies the improvement plan's AYP area(s) of focus by describing the area(s) in which the school did not make adequate yearly progress for two years;
- c) includes an overview of the underlying or "root cause" issues identified as most likely affecting student achievement (this information will help reviewers understand the rationale for the activities to be implemented); and
- d) summarizes the activities and strategies to be implemented over the next two years to improve student achievement in the area(s) described in (b) above.

2007-2008 School Improvement Plan Memorandum of Understanding

The Superintendent of Schools assures the Commissioner of Education that:

- s/he or a designee has provided the identified school with technical assistance during the development of this school improvement plan and has reviewed the document prior to submission to the NH Department of Education
- the identified school will establish annual, measurable objectives for continuous and substantial progress by each group of students enrolled;
- the identified school will provide to its teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, high quality professional development that directly addresses the academic achievement issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement;
- the identified school will adopt policies and practices around the core academic subjects that have the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students – and each student – will meet the State’s proficiency levels of achievement on the State assessment;
- the identified school will incorporate, if appropriate, activities before school, after school, or during an extension of the school year; and
- s/he or a designee will continue to provide technical assistance to the identified school as it implements the goals and objectives described in the school improvement plan. Technical assistance will at a minimum include assistance and support with:
 - accessing and analyzing data
 - scheduling and planning professional development
 - identifying solutions that are based on data, research and evidence
 - analyzing and revising or increasing the school’s budget.

Superintendent of Schools

Date

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SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

2007-08 School Enrollment:

Grades levels of the school (i.e. K-8, K-5, etc.):

STUDENTS	SCHOOL YEAR		
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
% Caucasian			
% African- American			
% Asian/Pacific Islander			
% American Indian			
% Hispanic			
% Other			
% Female			
% Male			
% LEP			
% Special Education			

SCHOOL STAFF	2007-08
Total Number of Instructional Staff	
New Instructional Staff	
Total Number of Paraprofessional Staff Providing Instructional Support	
New Paraprofessional Staff Providing Instructional Support	
Total Number of Administrative Staff	
New Administrative Staff	

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING

Instructions:

Provide a description of the following:

- (a) the school's consultation with parents and outside experts in the development of the plan;
- (b) the peer review process used within the school and/or district to review the completed plan. Include who, what, where, and when the peer review took place; and
- (c) the methods to be used for informing the public about the plan's purpose and progress.

Provide a description of the team charged with monitoring implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement plan, including:

- (a) the names, titles, and positions of team members, and the constituency each member represents;
- (b) the process and timeline established for monitoring implementation of the proposed strategies;
- (c) the process and timeline established for monitoring the effectiveness of the proposed strategies in leading to the desired outcomes

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GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Instructions:

For each area in which the school was identified for improvement, clearly describe the goals, objectives, and proposed activities to be implemented to improve outcomes in that area.

Duplicate the form on the next page and complete one form for each goal.

As referenced in Appendix A, it is advisable to limit the plan to a few key goals with realistic, achievable objectives that target the conditions within the school's control that are most likely to help improve student achievement.

It is understood that some activities may be designed to address multiple areas or issues; clearly indicate this when applicable.

See Page 15 for an example of a completed form.

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

**2007-2008 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

Instructions: Use the format below to describe the proposed activities for 2007-2008. Provide sufficient detail to assist the reviewers in understanding how the activities are designed to achieve the anticipated changes/outcomes in school practice and student learning.

Duplicate this page as needed. Complete one form for each improvement goal.

Goal						<p>The following strategies will be implemented to achieve this goal (check all that apply):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improvement in Curriculum and Instruction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establishing or Implementing Local Assessments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Implementing Processes to Follow the Progress of Each Child</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing Specific Needs of Low-Achieving Students</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changes in School Systems or Processes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Leadership/Governance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Climate/Culture (staff and/or students)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of Scientifically-Based Research Programs or Processes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parent and Community Involvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extended-Time Learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe: _____)</p>
Strategy						
Objectives (to be written as responses to the italicized questions)	<i>What school practices/programs will be improved/enhanced through this strategy?</i> OBJECTIVE:					
	<i>How will <u>student learning</u> be improved/enhanced through this strategy?</i> OBJECTIVE:					
Proposed Activities for 2007-2008 <i>Describe the activities to be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes in school practices and student learning. Provide sufficient detail so that reviewers will understand the purpose and proposed implementation of each activity.</i>	Resources <i>What existing and/or new resources will be used to accomplish the activity?</i>	Timeline <i>When will this activity begin and end?</i>	Oversight <i>Who will take primary responsibility/ leadership? Who else needs to be involved?</i>	Monitoring (Implementation) <i>What evidence will be collected to document implementation? How often and by whom?</i>	Monitoring (Effectiveness) <i>What evidence will be collected to assess effectiveness? How often and by whom?</i>	



APPENDICES

Instructions and Materials for Developing the School Improvement Plan

APPENDIX A

DEVELOPING THE PLAN: A RECOMMENDED PROCESS

The planning process described in this section was developed through a synthesis of school improvement planning models¹ that include a root cause analysis² component. The process is one approach for identifying important underlying, or “root cause” issues that may be adversely affecting student achievement. See Pages 14 and 15 for examples of the types of information a planning team might gather from using this approach.

Step 1: “Taking Stock” of Current Practice

A. Establishing A Focus

A logical starting point in the planning process is to establish the focus of the plan. As required by law, the focus of the improvement plan must be the content area(s) in which the school did not make adequate yearly progress for two years, resulting in the designation as a school in need of improvement.

B. Documenting Current Initiatives

What initiatives are already in place? How connected are they? Consider questions such as:

- what is the focus of our initiatives? What are they designed to do or improve?
- do any of our current initiatives target the areas in which the school did not make AYP?
- what is the status of our initiatives – have they been fully implemented?
- what evidence have we collected to know whether initiatives are leading to the desired results?
- is the evidence data-based?

C. Gathering Additional Information About Current Practice

Ask the following reflective questions to dig deeper into areas identified through research as critical to student achievement:

Standards-based curriculum and instruction. To what extent –

- is our curriculum in core content areas regularly reviewed and evaluated?
- is our curriculum aligned with state frameworks and grade-level/grade-span expectations?
- do teachers provide appropriate differentiated instruction in their classrooms?
- do instructional strategies emphasize higher-order thinking skills, such as problem-solving and critical, creative thinking?

Standards-based assessment. To what extent –

- does the faculty regularly analyze and discuss assessment results to plan instruction, identify student strengths and pinpoint areas that need reinforcement?
- is a system in place for timely identification of struggling learners?

¹ Assessment Continuum of Schoolwide Improvement Outcomes: Implementing the Components of Systemic Schoolwide Improvement. ©2002. New England Comprehensive Assistance Center at Education Development Center, Inc. <http://main.edc.org/theme/schools.asp>

² Preuss, P.G. (2003). *School Leader's Guide to Root Cause Analysis: Using Data to Dissolve Problems*. www.eyeeeducation.com

APPENDIX A (continued)

Accountability. To what extent -

- do we disaggregate student achievement data to follow the progress of each student?
- do we use disaggregated student achievement data to set priorities for professional development?
- do we analyze program effectiveness in order to plan instruction and set priorities?
- do we annually share results from local, district, and state assessments through newsletters, PTO meetings, local press releases, and the school/district web page?
- do we provide such information, to the extent possible, in languages that parents can understand?

Structural reform strategies. To what extent –

- are structured planning opportunities for staff a regular part of the school schedule?
- are teachers provided with the opportunity to plan their work collaboratively?
- is support for novice teachers available?
- is uninterrupted time dedicated each day and week to instruction in core areas?
- have there been significant changes in staff, teaming structures, leadership structures, or enrollment?

Leadership and governance. To what extent –

- has the school used an improvement plan with measurable performance goals to guide its work?
- is shared leadership evident, as appropriate, to support and improve instruction?

Professional development. To what extent –

- is professional development aligned with curricular priorities and student achievement goals?
- are professional development opportunities available to paraprofessionals so to ensure consistency in knowledge and practice among all instructional staff?

Culture and climate. To what extent –

- are disciplinary issues interfering with instructional time?
- do teachers work independently rather than collaboratively?
- is collaboration and reflective practice valued?

External support and resources. To what extent –

- is the school aware of federal resources received at the district level that could be leveraged to support its improvement plan?
- are partnerships with businesses or organizations actively supporting the school's improvement goals?

Parent and community involvement. To what extent –

- are parents and community members familiar with what students are expected to know, do, and demonstrate, and what they can do to support their child's achievement?
- are resources, tools, or training provided to help parents support their child's learning?

Extended learning activities. To what extent –

- are extended-learning activities available at our school?
- are students most in need participating?

APPENDIX A (continued)

Step 2: What Are the Results? What are Possible Reasons Why?

In Step 1, the team has reviewed and discussed current efforts to improve student achievement. Step 2 involves looking at data to examine the results of those efforts. Review the data from local and state assessments, together with data from the school's AYP reports, to consider the following:

- is each student meeting the state performance targets in Reading and Math? To what extent?
- Is each group of students meeting the targets? To what extent?
- are there patterns or trends? Do these patterns hold up over time?
- why, despite all of our efforts and initiatives, are we not getting the results we want?
- what factors or conditions are getting in the way?
- how do we know?

The team will undoubtedly brainstorm many possible “root cause” issues getting in the way of student achievement. However, it is important to differentiate between hunches and statements that can be supported with hard evidence. For example, if the “CHECK ENGINE” light remains on after starting a vehicle, is it because of a minor electronic malfunction? It's only a hunch unless it's supported with solid evidence.

Step 3: Setting Goals and Achievable Objectives

Once the team has identified core issues to be addressed to improve student achievement, the next step is to set priorities. What to work on first? What to work on over time? For this two-year plan, establish goals and measurable objectives that can be achieved within a two-year time frame. Target “root cause” issues within the school's control.

Step 4: Selecting Strategies and Activities

This step involves determining which strategies and activities, supported through research, the school will implement in order to address the identified issues. Points to consider include:

- the rationale for the strategy – how will it help?
- in what settings and for which populations has the strategy been effective?
- is the strategy appropriate/feasible for our situation?
- is there credible research demonstrating the strategy's effectiveness?

APPENDIX A (continued)

PLANNING PROCESS FOR THE ABC SCHOOL TEAM (EXAMPLE)

Step 1: “Taking Stock” of Current Practice

Step 2: What Are the Results? What are Possible Reasons Why?

The ABC School Planning Team determined that achievement in mathematics for students with disabilities had been a concern for some time. By “digging deeper”, the team identified and explored a number of possible contributing factors:

- the mathematics curriculum is not fully aligned with state grade-level expectations
- students miss core instruction when pulled out to work with specialists
- a structure is needed for general and special educators to regularly collaborate on instruction
- professional development has been devoted to other priorities
- training for paraprofessionals providing direct instruction is inconsistent

Step 3: Setting Goals and Achievable Objectives

These underlying issues provided the rationale for establishing the following goals and objectives:

Goal: All student groups will make progress towards state performance targets in Mathematics, as evidenced by local and state assessments.

Objectives:

- By January of 2008, modify schedules so that students do not miss core instruction in mathematics
- By the end of Year 1, the mathematics curriculum will be fully aligned with state frameworks and grade-level/grade-span expectations
- By the end of Year 2, general and special educators, including paraprofessionals, will meet regularly to plan instruction, develop common assessment, and review results.

Step 4: Selecting Strategies and Activities

The school will implement the following activities to meet these objectives::

- continue alignment of mathematics curriculum across grade levels within the district and complete alignment of curriculum with grade-level expectations
- review and revise scheduling for students so that instructional time in mathematics is not lost
- align professional development planned for 2007-08 with priority needs in mathematics identified through this improvement plan;
- request assistance from special education technical assistance consultants to help the school design a process for collaborative sharing and planning among general and special educators

See the next page for an example of how this information is transferred to the “Goals, Objectives, and Proposed Activities” form.

**2007-2008 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THE ABC SCHOOL
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES
(EXAMPLE)**

Instructions: Use the format below to describe the proposed activities for 2007-2008. Provide sufficient detail to assist the reviewers in understanding how the activities are designed to achieve the anticipated changes/outcomes in school practice and student learning.
Duplicate this page as needed. Complete one form for each improvement goal.

AYP Area of Focus	The school did not make AYP in Mathematics in 2006 and 2007. Our disaggregated data shows that students with disabilities, as a group, did not make AYP in Mathematics either year.				<i>The following strategies will be implemented to achieve this goal (check all that apply):</i>		
Goal	Using the 2006 NECAP results as the baseline, all student groups will make progress towards state performance targets in Mathematics, as evidenced by local and state assessments.				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Improvement in Curriculum and Instruction</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Establishing or Implementing Local Assessments</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Establishing or Implementing Processes to Follow the Progress of Each Child</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Addressing Specific Needs of Low-Achieving Students</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Professional Development</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Changes in School Systems or Processes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Leadership/Governance</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Climate/Culture (staff and/or students)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Implementation of Scientifically-Based Research Programs or Processes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Parent and Community Involvement</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Extended-Time Learning</i>		
Objectives	1) By January 2008, scheduling will be modified so that students receiving support from specialists do not miss core instruction in mathematics 2) By the end of Year 1, general and special educators, including paraprofessionals, will regularly meet to collaborate on instruction. 3) By the end of Year 2, the math curriculum will be fully aligned with grade-level expectations and consistently implemented across and within each grade.				<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other (please describe): _____</i>		
Proposed Activities for 2007-2008 <i>Describe the activities to be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes in school practices and student learning. Provide sufficient detail so that reviewers will understand the purpose and proposed implementation of each activity.</i>	Resources <i>What existing and/or new resources will be used to accomplish the activity?</i>	Timeline <i>When will this activity begin and end?</i>	Oversight <i>Who will take primary responsibility/ leadership? Who else needs to be involved?</i>	Monitoring (Implementation) <i>What evidence will be collected to document implementation? How often and by whom?</i>	Monitoring (Effectiveness) <i>What evidence will be collected to assess effectiveness? How often and by whom?</i>	Title I School Improvement Funds <i>Include amount allocated to this activity if applicable. Provide the requested detail on the Budget Narrative Form. Complete all applicable Budget Justification Forms.</i>	
<i>Provide a detailed description of proposed activities here</i>							

APPENDIX B CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Technical Review

Please organize the completed plan in the following sequence:

- Completed cover page
- Improvement Plan Abstract
- School Demographic Information
- Description of the Plan Development and Monitoring, including the district's peer review of the plan
- Goals, Objectives, and Proposed Activities

Content Review

Plans will be reviewed to determine the extent to which:

- the abstract clearly describes the underlying, or "root cause" issues the proposed activities are designed to address;
- the plan's goals, objectives, and proposed activities are clearly aligned with the area(s) that caused the school to be identified;
- the objectives are written as results-oriented statements, with a timetable;
- the proposed activities are described in sufficient detail; and
- a plan for how the activities will be monitored and assessed for effectiveness is clearly explained.