

Analyzing Educational Systems for Fiscal and Instructional Effectiveness: A Self Assessment and Planning Guide

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Self-Assessment Project Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Part I. Is this self-assessment right for your school district/supervisory union?	4
Part II. Getting Organized and Getting Started	9
Agenda for Organizational Meeting.	10
Timeline	11
Part III. Sessions	
(A) Session 1	12
➤ Group Self Assessment	
(B) Session 2	27
➤ Strengths and Needs	
(C) Session 3	31
➤ Site Overview	
(D) Session 4	37
➤ Data Review	
(E) Session 5	49
➤ Data Analysis	
(F) Session 6	52
➤ Goals	
(G) Session 7	57
➤ Action Plan	
(H) Session 8	59
➤ Closure	
Appendix A: Individual Self-Assessment.	60
Appendix B: Forms for Recording Purposes.	74

INTRODUCTION:

The *Special Education Programs and Fiscal Review Panel* has supported the development of a self-assessment process and instrument which is available to all school districts. It is designed to assist school districts to understand the strengths and needs of programs and costs related to educating all students. However, the self assessment is not suitable for every district. It requires commitment to a specific process and some internal supports and resources.

In order to determine if this self-assessment is appropriate for your district, please take 15-20 minutes individually or as an Administrative Team to complete *Part I: "Is this self-assessment right for your school district/supervisory union?"*

If you determine that this process is right for you, move to *Part II: "Getting Organized and Getting Started."* If you determine it is not right, recommendations for next steps can be found at the end of *Part I*.

Part I. IS THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT RIGHT FOR YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT/SUPERVISORY UNION?

Are you interested in a systemic approach to gathering and analyzing information from various perspectives on the functioning of your school district/supervisory union? Please review the following areas and check the box that best represents your assessment within each area.

Check one box for each statement

A.	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
Educational Support Systems				
1. Implementation of an Educational Support System (ESS) that provides an inclusive, integrated and comprehensive set of support services for students with and without disabilities...				
2. Operation of functional Educational Support Teams (EST) that provide alternatives within the general education structure for supporting students who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral challenges...				
Financial Decision-Making and Management				
3. The process used to make financial management decisions about educational programs and resources...				

Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
Leadership and Decision-Making				
4. The overall philosophy and practices related to leadership and decision-making...				
Standards-based Curricula and Assessment				
5. The use of empirically-tested curricula and standards-based assessment to improve instructional outcomes for all students...				
Professional Development				
6. The culture of learning and professionalism as evidenced by opportunities for teachers and other staff to acquire new knowledge and skills...				
School and Community Partnerships				
7. The existence of partnerships with community agencies and organizations...				

Is the needed support in place to make use of the information that would be gathered through this self-assessment?

Check one box for each statement

B.	High Support	Moderate Support	Low Support
	8. Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent		
9. Special Education Administrator			
10. Principals			
11. General Educators			
12. Special Educators			
13. Parents (determined by district)			
14. School Board (determined by district)			

Does the district have the resources required to complete the self-assessment?

Check one box for each statement

C.

Yes

We will
work it out

No

Time

15. *Superintendent*: Time to provide feedback and/or written support of self-assessment process and action planning

16. *Core Team*: Special Education Administrator, Principal, Special Educators, General Educators, School Board, Parents: Time to meet as a group (4 full or 8 half days)

17. *School Board*: Time on Board meeting agendas for report(s) (determined by district)

Other Resources

18. Secretarial support

19. Place to hold full day meetings with food and beverages available

20. Substitute pay for teachers on the Core Team

21. Stipends, if necessary

What do you think?

After reviewing the responses to the items presented above, it is up to you to decide if this is the right process for your district.

- ⇒ Will it give you the information you need and/or want?
- ⇒ Is there enough of the right kind of support to complete the self-assessment?
- ⇒ Do you have the minimum resources that are required to complete the self-assessment and action plan development?

If all answers are “yes,” then move on to Part II.

If the answers to the above questions are “no,” consider the following recommendations:

If this process does not give you the information that you need or want...

- ⇒ Then you may wish to identify a different assessment, redesign questions, or seek an external evaluator who can design a process to investigate your concerns.

If you feel you may not have adequate support at this time for this process...

- ⇒ Then you may want to focus on generating support and revisit this process in the future or determine whether support exists for an assessment by an external evaluator.

If you believe you do not have the minimum resources for this process...

- ⇒ Then you may want to identify what resources are needed, develop a plan for generating them and return to self-assessment in the future (e.g., budget for secretarial support and stipends, and to address work time issue for following year through development of professional development calendar).

Part II. Getting Organized and Getting Started

The process of getting ready for the self-assessment includes all of the steps which much be completed before you can actually begin to self-assess. For some districts, this step will take one week; for others, 2-3 months.

Take some time to develop the proposed timeline and identify who will complete each step.

When you have completed this stage of preparation, you will be ready to hold your first session.

	Responsible Person	Targeted Date	Actual Date
1. Meet with district administrators to discuss the self-assessment project.			
2. Inform your school board of the decision to conduct a Fiscal Review and Educational Programs Self-Assessment.			
3. Identify membership of team (10-20 participants). Remember to include: ⇒ (a) Administrators ⇒ (b) Regular education teachers ⇒ (c) Special education teachers ⇒ (d) Paraeducators ⇒ (e) Parents, students, school counselors, Board members, related service providers at the discretion of the district			
4. Invite and confirm participants			
5. Hold an organizational meeting of all participants (see enclosed agenda, page 10).			
6. Develop and disseminate timeline and date(s) for sessions.			
7. Contact Department of Education for data. a. call Assistant Director for special education finance – 828-5119 b. Department of Education website for student achievement			
8. Locate suitable space.			
9. Arrange for substitutes, if necessary.			

AGENDA FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Date: _____ Participants: _____

- a. Review the reasons for doing a self-assessment in your school. Share results of Part I – Is this self-assessment right for your school?

- b. Describe the activities and timeline of the self-assessment (see page 11).

- c. Identify proposed dates (see page 11).

- d. Identify possible issues or needs which are to be addressed in order to create a smooth process.

- e. Distribute self-assessment to be completed individually (Appendix A).

TIMELINE FOR FISCAL REVIEW PANEL SELF-ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Activity	Steps	Proposed Dates
Getting organized and getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform Administrative Team ▪ Inform School Board ▪ Organize Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the number and specific participants in preferred group - Invite group members to join in the process ▪ Hold preliminary and organizational meeting with team ▪ Gather data from DOE and local sources ▪ Have individuals complete self-assessment (Appendix A) 	
Session 1 (approximately 3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete self-assessment as a group using individual responses 	
Session 2 (approximately 3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify strengths and needs of the system 	
Session 3 (approximately 3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete site overview 	
Session 4 (approximately 3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review data 	
Session 5 (approximately 3 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze qualitative and quantitative data 	
Session 6 (approximately 1-2 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set goals for system development 	
Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Action Plan 	
Session 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closure and Evaluation 	

Session 1

Complete Self-Assessment as a Group

During this session, the group members will draw upon the self assessment that was completed individually and attempt to reach consensus on the status of the district/supervisory union in each of the assessment items. Each item in the self-assessment will be discussed by the group as it identifies a rating and establishes supporting criteria which best describe the present status of its school(s).

Strong facilitation is essential, and the assignment of specific roles, such as timekeeper, taskmaster, and scribe(s) are strongly recommended.

The length of time for this activity will vary from one district to another and will be influenced by the size of the group and the group dynamics. Make a best guess at how long the work will take for each of the six sections of self-assessment and have the group adjust these estimates as it begins each new section.

The facilitator will need a plan for how to move the group toward consensus. In the event that consensus is unattainable, seek trends.

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR 1st SESSION:

GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT

Date: _____ Participants: _____

1. Review Process

2. Assign Roles

3. Develop time frame and schedule for breaks, lunch, etc.

4. Describe consensus building processes

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
A. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
	Educational Support Team (EST)			
1. The EST is utilized by a majority of teachers.				
2. The EST referral process is clearly articulated (e.g., teachers know how to make referrals, when EST meets, etc.).				
3. EST meetings are effectively run (e.g., starts on time, roles are assigned).				
4. EST recommendations are monitored and evaluated.				
5. Users (teachers/parents/administrators) report satisfaction with their EST.				
6. General education administrator(s) serve as a regular participating member(s) or as facilitator.				
7. Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., at least two per month).				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
Educational Support Services (ESS)				
8. The ESS is well-articulated and generally understood by its users (e.g., if asked, teachers could explain the components).				
9. Non-IEP supports include early literacy, academic and emotional behavioral supports and are available to ensure that student needs can be met outside of special education.				
10. Both non-special education and special education personnel provide ESS supports (e.g., additional individual or small group instruction, process behaviors with students, teach social skills curriculum, etc.).				
11. Needs identified through the evaluation of the ESS are reflected in the school Action Plan and/or budget.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Doing Well	Criteria/Evidence
Special Education Services				
12. Special education services reflect a range of services to meet the needs of students across all disabilities.				
13. Special education services reflect recommended best practices (e.g., supported by research).				
14. Special education assessment reflects recommended best practices.				
15. To the greatest degree possible, students are educated with their peers without disabilities.				
16. There are sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff to deliver IEP services.				
17. Related services are available to adequately meet the needs of students who are eligible for special education.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Doing Well	Criteria/Evidence
Special Education Services (continued)				
18. General educators appropriately participate in IEP development and implementation.				
19. General educators and special educators demonstrate effective collaboration.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
B. FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
20. Financial decisions are made based upon a long-range plan and/or Action Plans.				
21. There is knowledge of and support for the special education budget across all administrators.				
22. Use of revenues at school and district levels reflect a connection between district/school goals and knowledge/creative use of revenue sources.				
23. Factors which contribute to high or low spending are understood by administrative personnel, and a planning process exists for addressing these factors.				
24. Special education costs are overseen by special education directors at the district or school level, if appropriate.				
25. ESS costs are planned and responded to by administrators at the building level.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
C. LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
26. Leadership activities and decision-making are guided by a common sense of purpose (e.g., mission and/or vision).				
27. District and school-based leadership demonstrate a collaborative work style.				
28. School district and leadership personnel demonstrate effective communication strategies (e.g., communication is clear, concise, timely, respectful).				
29. Decisions are informed by data.				
30. There is a general sense of continuity within leadership positions.				
31. The relationship between central office and building leadership is operationally effective.				
32. Central office leaders are present at schools on a regular basis.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
C. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
33. Central office and building level leaders are knowledgeable about special education.				
34. Building level leaders are perceived to be instructional leaders.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
35. There is a clear vision for professional development in the district/supervisory union. The school district/supervisory union is characterized by a strong culture of learning (e.g., budgets contain money for professional development, time is set aside for professional development, professional development is encouraged, etc.).				
36. There is a long-range systemic focus to professional development in the district/supervisory union.				
37. There is a district/supervisory union-wide approach to teacher professional development planning.				
38. There is a district/supervisory union-wide approach to para-educator professional development planning.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
D. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
	39. Student assessment results, research, best practice, teacher and paraeducator input inform the professional development planning process.			
40. Professional development experiences enable general and special education teachers to promote access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.				
41. Professional development experiences enable general and special education teachers to support students with challenging behaviors in the general education classroom.				
42. Professional development activities are followed by a planned time for coaching and reflection to ensure optimal implementation of new learning.				
43. The district/supervisory union has a mentoring system to encourage and allow exceptional teachers to work with colleagues both inside and outside the classroom.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
E. SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
44. Individual parents are active members of the school community.				
45. Parents of students with disabilities are participating members of the Evaluation and IEP Teams.				
46. There are opportunities that allow individual parents to become part of a larger organized group of parents involved with school related initiatives.				
47. School personnel collaborate with personnel from other agencies to develop and provide services to students.				
48. School administrators are active in state, regional and national committees, boards and organizations comprised of personnel from various agencies for the purpose of enhancing resources and opportunities available to students.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
E. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
49. Transition programs are developed that provide community-based experiences and that connect high school students with disabilities with employers and human service agencies and post-secondary institutions.				
50. High school students have a genuine opportunity to take advantage of a course of study offered by regional learning centers (e.g., vocational/technical centers, community and state colleges, etc.).				
51. High school students have a genuine opportunity to be involved in partnerships with community businesses, community service projects, and mentor relationships.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
F. CURRICULA AND ASSESSMENT	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
52. The school district/ supervisory union has aligned their curricula with local, state, and/or national standards.				
53. In districts/supervisory unions with multiple elementary/middle schools serving the grades in K-8, curricula are coordinated throughout the district/ supervisory union to ensure all students have a similar background and experience prior to entering the same high school.				
54. Collaboration exists between special and general education to ensure that all students are provided the maximum opportunity to succeed in standards-based curricula and assessment (e.g., team teaching, peer coaching, common time for meeting, etc.).				
55. Learning opportunities are available for students with and without disabilities who are experiencing difficulties in meeting the Vermont Standards.				

Session 1	Self-Assessment: Group Form			
Check one box for each statement				
F. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Criteria/Evidence
56. At least 98% of students with disabilities participate in standards- based curricula and assessment.				
57. Local assessments are aligned with the Vermont Standards.				
58. An acceptable percentage of students are achieving at or above standards on standards-based measures (e.g., DRA and NSRE).				
59. Instruction is informed by assessment results.				

Session II

Identify Significant Findings

During this session you will analyze the results of the group work on the self assessment from the first session. Identify your strengths and weaknesses within your educational system in the areas of:

- I. Educational Support System
- II. Financial Decision-Making and Management
- III. Leadership and Decision-Making
- IV. Professional Development
- V. School and Community Partnerships
- VI. Standards-based Curricula and Assessment

A.

Write the following information on chart paper and post where all can see.

I. For the area Educational Support Systems, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see pages 14-17):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

1. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

II. For the area Financial Decision-making and Management, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see page 18):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

III. For the area Leadership and Decision-making, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see pages 19 and 20):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

IV. For the area Professional Development, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see pages 21 and 22):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

V. For the area School and Community Partnership, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see pages 23 and 24):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

VI For the area Curricula and Assessment, identify significant qualitative assessment information (see pages 25 and 26):

1. List the items on which you indicated you are doing well.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

2. List the items on which you indicate you need major work.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

B.

Look carefully for common themes or possible connections among areas.

Color code these themes on the chart paper.

Session 3

Site Overview

Developing a context for your self assessment is essential. Looking carefully at the variables that influence education in your school(s) will be invaluable as you seek to understand how you function as a school and why this is so.

Some of this information is data driven and therefore requires no group decision-making (e.g., child count, graduation rate). Other sections will necessitate more discussion and an effort to develop consensus around what information is most relevant (e.g., #4 significant political issues).

At this point, do your best to come to agreement. **YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO REACH CONSENSUS ABOUT WHAT IS MOST RELEVANT OR WHOSE PERSPECTIVE IS MOST WIDELY SHARED BY THE TEAM.** The self-assessment process is designed to develop insight as you progress through it. Work toward consensus, but be willing to move on if consensus eludes you.

Describe the context of this review:

1. Explain the number and configuration of schools:
Pre-K, Elementary, Middle, High, Vocational, Alternative, Private

* 2. Using your data charts, identify the following information and compare it to State averages.

	LOCAL	STATE	COMMENTS
(a) Child Count			
(b) Poverty			
Number of free/reduced lunches			
Percentage of Medicaid eligibility			
(c) Graduation Rate			

* Data about your district/supervisory union can be obtained from the State Department of Education by calling 802-828-5119.

3. Describe significant educational activities in your district in the past 1-3 years and identify the outcomes from these processes.	
(a) Accreditation	
(b) Monitoring/audit status (e.g., special education and/or Act 117)	
(c) Action Planning	
(d) Professional Development	
(e) District Initiatives	
(f) Other	

4. Describe significant local issues and their effect upon the educational system.	
(a) Political (e.g., issues related to School Board, Teachers' Association, changes in administration, competing issues of ideology)	
(b) Social (e.g., high relative % of homeless and/or migrant students)	
(c) Financial (e.g., impact of Act 60, recent budget votes)	
(d) Cultural diversity (e.g., high relative % of non-English language background students)	
(e) Home school, independent school placements made by families	

5. Describe your district's current status relative to special education spending.

(a) Ability to fill staff vacancies with qualified personnel.

- ⇒ Regular class teachers (who are skilled in teaching a range of students)
- ⇒ Special education teachers
- ⇒ Paraprofessionals
- ⇒ Related service providers

(b) Extraordinary cost

(c) Dispute resolution

- ⇒ Administration complaint
- ⇒ Mediation
- ⇒ Due process

Session 4

Data Review and Preliminary Analysis

In an attempt to create a comparative picture of your district/supervisory union, review the relevant data available from the State Department of Education.

The following data will be mailed to you from the State Department of Education upon request by calling 802-828-5119 for a copy of the data for your district/supervisory union as it compares to the State average. Forms that can be used to put this data in an easy to read format can be found in Appendix B (see page 74).

- ⇒ Five year trend chart for your district/supervisory union
- ⇒ Student count
- ⇒ Selected special education student count
- ⇒ Special interest student cost categories
- ⇒ Program costs
- ⇒ Special education staff (teachers)
- ⇒ Special education staff (para-educators)
- ⇒ Support services/student demographic information

Additional data is available on the Vermont Department of Education website under Vermont Department of Education School Report (<http://crs.uvm.edu/schlrpt/>). This data is easily read in the format available on the website. The additional data includes:

- ⇒ School participation information
- ⇒ Technology information
- ⇒ Staff information
- ⇒ Level of education of adults in your community
- ⇒ Food assistance information
- ⇒ Income information
- ⇒ Current school expenditures
- ⇒ Student assessment data

Session 4 (continued)

During this session examine the data referenced above. For each category of data (16 in all), consider the following questions and record your conclusions. See Appendix B for forms to use for recording purposes.

1. What does the data tell you about your school district/supervisory union? Compare your data to the State average and note if you fall above or below the State average.
2. Do you have some thoughts on why this may be? List the factors that might contribute to the differences you noted.
3. Is there additional information that may be helpful in drawing conclusions about this data?

Chart D.2 Miscellaneous – Special Education Dispute Resolution

FY- _____ ALL-SITE Fiscal/Programmatic Data

CATEGORIES OF COMPARISON →	# of Administrative Complaints Filed Concerning District During FY- _____		# of Due Process Cases Filed Concerning District During FY- _____		# of Special Education Cases Which Underwent Mediation During FY- _____	
	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs
District/SU Name(s)	Data for Your District/Supervisory Union					

STUDENT ASSESSMENT
FY 00 Data
Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System

Compare the data from your district with that of Vermont
 Percentage of Students in the Highest Two Performance Levels
 (achieving the Standard or achieving the Standard with Honors)

School/District Name:	School/District	VT
Elementary Level		
Developmental Reading – Tested at Grade 2		
Elementary Mathematics – Tested at Grade 4		
⇒ Mathematical Concepts		
⇒ Mathematical Skills		
Mathematical Problem Solving		
Elementary English/Language Arts – Tested at Grade 4		
⇒ Reading: Basic Understanding		
⇒ Reading: Analysis & Interpretation		
⇒ Writing Effectiveness		
⇒ Writing Conventions		
Elementary Science – Tested at Grade 6		
Middle Level		
Middle Level Mathematics – Tested at Grade 8		
⇒ Mathematical Concepts		
⇒ Mathematical Skills		
⇒ Mathematical Problem Solving		
Middle Level English/Language Arts – Tested at Grade 8		
⇒ Reading: Basic Understanding		
⇒ Reading: Analysis & Interpretation		
⇒ Writing Effectiveness		
⇒ Writing Conventions		

High School Level		
High School Level Mathematics – Tested at Grade 10		
⇒ Mathematical Concepts		
⇒ Mathematical Skills		
⇒ Mathematical Problem Solving		
High School Level English/Language Arts – Tested at Grade 10		
⇒ Reading: Basic Understanding		
⇒ Reading: Analysis & Interpretation		
⇒ Writing Effectiveness		
⇒ Writing Conventions		

Number of Students Within the District/Supervisory Union Who Were Receiving No Special Services and Who Were Scoring at the Lowest Two Performance Levels in the DRA and Selected Areas of the NSRE for the Most Recent Spring Testing											
# of Students in the Lowest Two Performance Levels Not Receiving Special Services							Total Students Taking Assessments				
DRA Assessment & Selected Content Area of the NSRE	2 nd	4 th	6 th	8 th	10 th	Total Counts & Percentages	2 nd	4 th	6 th	8 th	10 th
DRA											
Mathematical Skills											
Reading: Basic Understanding											

Session 5

Data Analysis

In this session you will examine the descriptive information about your system as well as the information you have obtained from numerical data.

You will develop an understanding of how various factors within your system impact each other.

This information will provide the basis for goal setting and developing a plan of action.

A. Post Charts which:

⇒ List the six (6) areas of evaluation and the strength and weaknesses in each area; and/or

⇒ Disseminate the findings about your numerical data (from pages 39-48).

Divide into small groups, each of which will work with one or two evaluation areas (i.e., ESS, Leadership, and Decision Making)

B. Discuss as a Group:

Which of our strengths must be continued and which of our weaknesses must be addressed in order for us to be the best educational system for all students that we can be. (No more than two)

1. Strengths to continue:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

2. Weaknesses to address or discontinue:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

Does the data support what we considered to be strengths and weaknesses?
(Adjust if necessary)

Session 6

Goal Setting

In this session you will develop the long-term (1-5 years) goals for your system. These goals may reflect continuing development of the strengths in your system as well as improvement upon weaknesses you have identified.

To Set Effective Goals:

A.

Identify 3-5 areas of priority (example: reading comprehension)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

To Set Effective Goals:

B.

Write each goal so that it describes what you would see if the goal is achieved and how it will be assessed (example: students in grade 10 demonstrate comprehension of their science and social studies texts while reading independently as evidenced by improved NSRE data).

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

To Set Effective Goals (continued):

B.

Write each goal so that it describes what you would see if the goal is achieved and how it will be assessed (example: students in grade 10 demonstrate comprehension of their science and social studies texts while reading independently as evidenced by improved NSRE data).

Goal 3:

Goal 4:

To Set Effective Goals (continued):

B.

Write each goal so that it describes what you would see if the goal is achieved and how it will be assessed (example: students in grade 10 demonstrate comprehension of their science and social studies texts while reading independently as evidenced by improved NSRE data).

Goal 5:

Session 7

Developing a Plan of Action

Use the following chart to create a one-year plan for each goal which describes the action steps and the benchmarks.

Long-term Goal:

ACTION	EVIDENCE	TIMELINE	PERSONNEL

Session 8

Closure and Evaluation

AGENDA

- ⇒ Review the goals and action plans and gain agreement of the group (30 mins.)

- ⇒ Discuss how the work will be shared with a broader group of constituents – for example, faculty and staff, administrative team, school board.
 - a. Develop a timeline and identify responsible person(s).

- ⇒ Define a process.

- ⇒ Complete the evaluation of the self assessment process (p. 77).

Appendix A

Self-Assessment: To Be Completed Individually by each Team Member

The Fiscal Review Panel self-assessment provides you an opportunity to examine your school(s) in six areas:

- (A) Educational Support Systems;
- (B) Financial Decision-Making and Management;
- (C) Leadership and Decision-Making;
- (D) Professional Development;
- (E) School/Community Partnerships;
- (F) Curricula and Assessment.

For each item, rate your school:

- ⇒ Doing Well; Needs Some Work; or Needs Major Work.
- ⇒ Identify the criteria or the evidence that led you to your conclusion.
- ⇒ Complete an assessment ***on your own*** and bring it to the group meeting in which you will develop consensus on each item.

(Remember: Your rating is intended to represent a critical perspective – your own!)

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
A. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
Educational Support Team (EST)					
1. The EST is utilized by a majority of teachers.					
2. The EST referral process is clearly articulated (e.g., teachers know how to make referrals, when EST meets, etc.).					
3. EST meetings are effectively run (e.g., starts on time, roles are assigned).					
4. EST recommendations are monitored and evaluated.					
5. Users (teachers/parents/administrators) report satisfaction with their EST.					
6. General education administrator(s) serve as a regular participating member(s) or as facilitator.					
7. Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., at least two per month).					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
Educational Support Services (ESS)					
8. The ESS is well-articulated and generally understood by its users (e.g., if asked, teachers could explain the components).					
9. Non-IEP supports include early literacy, academic and emotional behavioral supports and are available to ensure that student needs can be met outside of special education.					
10. Both non-special education and special education personnel provide ESS supports (e.g., additional individual or small group instruction, process behaviors with students, teach social skills curriculum, etc.).					
11. Needs identified through the evaluation of the ESS are reflected in the school Action Plan and/or budget.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
Special Education Services					
12. Special education services reflect a range of services to meet the needs of students across all disabilities.					
13. Special education services reflect recommended best practices (e.g., supported by research).					
14. Special education assessment reflects recommended best practices.					
15. To the greatest degree possible, students are educated with their peers without disabilities.					
16. There are sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff to deliver IEP services.					
17. Related services are available to adequately meet the needs of students who are eligible for special education.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
Special Education Services (continued)					
18. General educators appropriately participate in IEP development and implementation.					
19. General educators and special educators demonstrate effective collaboration.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
B. FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
20. Financial decisions are made based upon a long-range plan and/or Action Plans.					
21. There is knowledge of and support for the special education budget across all administrators.					
22. Use of revenues at school and district levels reflect a connection between district/school goals and knowledge/creative use of revenue sources.					
23. Factors which contribute to high or low spending are understood by administrative personnel, and a planning process exists for addressing these factors.					
24. Special education costs are overseen by special education directors at the district or school level, if appropriate.					
25. ESS costs are planned and responded to by administrators at the building level.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form

Check one box for each statement

C. LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
26. Leadership activities and decision-making are guided by a common sense of purpose (e.g., mission and/or vision).					
27. District and school-based leadership demonstrate a collaborative work style.					
28. School district and leadership personnel demonstrate effective communication strategies (e.g., communication is clear, concise, timely, respectful).					
29. Decisions are informed by data.					
30. There is a general sense of continuity within leadership positions.					
31. The relationship between central office and building leadership is operationally effective.					
32. Central office leaders are present at schools on a regular basis.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
C. (continued)	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
33. Central office and building level leaders are knowledgeable about special education.					
34. Building level leaders are perceived to be instructional leaders.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form

Check one box for each statement

D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
<p>35. There is a clear vision for professional development in the district/supervisory union. The school district/supervisory union is characterized by a strong culture of learning (e.g., budgets contain money for professional development, time is set aside for professional development, professional development is encouraged, etc.).</p>					
<p>36. There is a long-range systemic focus to professional development in the district/supervisory union.</p>					
<p>37. There is a district/supervisory union-wide approach to teacher professional development planning.</p>					
<p>38. There is a district/supervisory union-wide approach to para-educator professional development planning.</p>					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form

Check one box for each statement

D. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
39. Student assessment results, research, best practice, teacher and paraeducator input inform the professional development planning process.					
40. Professional development experiences enable general and special education teachers to promote access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.					
41. Professional development experiences enable general and special education teachers to support students with challenging behaviors in the general education classroom.					
42. Professional development activities are followed by a planned time for coaching and reflection to ensure optimal implementation of new learning.					
43. The district/supervisory union has a mentoring system to encourage and allow exceptional teachers to work with colleagues both inside and outside the classroom.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
Check one box for each statement					
E. SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
44. Individual parents are active members of the school community.					
45. Parents of students with disabilities are participating members of the Evaluation and IEP Teams.					
46. There are opportunities that allow individual parents to become part of a larger organized group of parents involved with school related initiatives.					
47. School personnel collaborate with personnel from other agencies to develop and provide services to students.					
48. School administrators are active in state, regional and national committees, boards and organizations comprised of personnel from various agencies for the purpose of enhancing resources and opportunities available to students.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
E. (continued)	Check one box for each statement				
	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
49. Transition programs are developed that provide community-based experiences and that connect high school students with disabilities with employers and human service agencies and post-secondary institutions.					
50. High school students have a genuine opportunity to take advantage of a course of study offered by regional learning centers (e.g., vocational/technical centers, community and state colleges, etc.).					
51. High school students have a genuine opportunity to be involved in partnerships with community businesses, community service projects, and mentor relationships.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form

Check one box for each statement

F. CURRICULA AND ASSESSMENT	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
	52. The school district/ supervisory union has aligned their curricula with local, state, and/or national standards.				
53. In districts/supervisory unions with multiple elementary/middle schools serving the grades in K-8, curricula are coordinated throughout the district/ supervisory union to ensure all students have a similar background and experience prior to entering the same high school.					
54. Collaboration exists between special and general education to ensure that all students are provided the maximum opportunity to succeed in standards-based curricula and assessment (e.g., team teaching, peer coaching, common time for meeting, etc.).					
55. Learning opportunities are available for students with and without disabilities who are experiencing difficulties in meeting the Vermont Standards.					

Self-Assessment: Individual Form					
Check one box for each statement					
F. (continued)	Needs Major Work	Needs Some Work	Is Working Well	Don't Know	Criteria/Evidence
56. At least 98% of students with disabilities participate in standards-based curricula and assessment.					
57. Local assessments are aligned with the Vermont Standards.					
58. An acceptable percentage of students are achieving at or above standards on standards-based measures (e.g., DRA and NSRE).					
59. The percentage of students not meeting the standard on standards-based measures (i.e., DRA & NSRE) is continually being reduced.					
60. Instruction is informed by assessment results.					
61. Educators demonstrate data-driven decision-making in planning and problem solving.					

Appendix B

Data Category: _____
(i.e., 5 year trend, student count, selected special education student count, etc.)

After reviewing the pertinent data, consider the following questions as a means to reflect on the data.

- ⇒ What does this data tell you about your school district/supervisory union?

- ⇒ How does the data for your district/supervisory union compare to the Vermont average?

- ⇒ Make note of the areas where you fall far above or below levels indicated by the Vermont data.

- ⇒ Do you have some thoughts on why this may be? List the factors that might contribute to the differences you noted.

- ⇒ Is there additional information that may be helpful in drawing conclusions about this data?

Is there additional Assessment data you wish to consider?

Consider all the assessment data you have:

What does your assessment data tell you about the effectiveness of school-wide instruction?

What does your assessment data tell you about special education services?

Does the data lead you to believe that most students are experiencing success in your district/supervisory union?

Are the supports you offer through your ESS a match with what you have learned you need through this process?

Self-Assessment Evaluation

Did you find this process useful for you and your school?

⇒ Please explain. If so, in what ways? If not, how could it be improved?