



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234
Office of P-12 Education

Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Accountability
55 Hanson Place, Room 400
Brooklyn, New York 11217
Tel. (718) 722-2796 / Fax: (718) 722-4559

To: District Superintendents, Superintendents of Public Schools, Title I Coordinators, and School Improvement Liaisons

From: Ira Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner *Ira Schwartz*

Subject: Synthesis of Feedback from Statewide District Comprehensive Improvement Plan and School Comprehensive Education Plan Meeting

Date: June 2015

On February 23, 2015, the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) hosted a statewide meeting to elicit feedback and suggestions for improvements related to the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) and School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) processes. The Department would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting and provided valuable feedback. Staff have analyzed and synthesized the feedback and made substantial revisions to the DCIP and SCEP processes based upon this feedback. Some of the revisions include:

- Removing the fiscal component from the SCEP;
- Simplifying the SCEP to include one goal per Tenet;
- Streamlining the fiscal requirements within the DCIP; and
- Increasing technical support.

A more detailed description of revisions can be found in Attachment A: Revisions to DCIP/SCEP Processes for the 2014-15 School Year.

The Department is committed to continuing to provide increased supports to identified Focus Districts and Priority and Focus Schools through a partnership model. We value the feedback that has been offered in helping improve the process toward the goal of all students in New York State graduating from high school college- and career-ready. We encourage you to continue providing feedback on any further improvements that you believe should be made to the processes. Suggestions and/or questions may be emailed to fdip@nysed.gov with the subject line “Suggested DCIP/SCEP Improvements.”

The Department is also continuing to refine the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) process. One example of a recent revision, fueled by stakeholder feedback, is the use of a rubric in which districts will now receive a rating of Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, or Stage 4 rather than

Ineffective, Developing, Effective or Highly Effective in DTSDE District reports. It is our belief that these new terms better capture our approach that the review process is intended to identify where the district falls within the continuum of development rather than to stigmatize. We recognize that districts are complex entities, and we are constantly reflecting on how the review process can best serve as a tool to drive improvement. We hope that this particular adjustment in the terms used will help further this goal. We are considering adopting similar terminology for the DTSDE school reviews beginning in 2015-16. More information about opportunities to assist the Department in its refinement of the DTSDE process will be sent in separate correspondence.

We look forward to continued collaboration on school and district improvement efforts. We wish you great success for the upcoming school year and beyond.

Attachment A

Revisions to DCIP/SCEP Processes for the 2014-15 School Year

| Feedback/Recommendations from Districts | Changes in the 2015-16 DCIP/SCEP Processes |
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| Schools are writing too many goals; there needs to be more focus. | The SCEP has been streamlined, and schools must now create one goal per Tenet for a total of five goals. |
| Feedback on the plans is not timely. | NYSED will begin implementing a new review process designed to expedite feedback. |
| DTSDE recommendations may be misleading. | The DCIP/SCEP templates have been revised to include a “needs statement” that takes into account the DTSDE recommendations and all other relevant data the district/school has available at the time. |
| There is a need for increased and better technical assistance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been engaging in individualized technical assistance sessions as requested by districts and schools. • Completion guides have been posted for the DCIP and SCEP. |
| Provide examples of SMART goals. | Examples of SMART goals were sent to all Focus Districts following the March 2015 DTSDE Institute. |
| Add gradients for growth. | Leading indicators have been added to the templates to help monitor growth toward the identified SMART goal. |
| Provide more training in general and also more training that is relevant to the process. | The Department is now providing training that synergistically links the DTSDE review process to DCIP/SCEP/Strategic Plan for School Excellence development process. |
| Fiscal components are cumbersome and do not provide flexibility. | Fiscal accountability has been eliminated in the SCEP template and is captured in the DCIP. The fiscal components of the DCIP have been streamlined to provide more flexibility to districts. |
| Eliminate the prioritized funding matrix. | The prioritized funding matrix has been replaced by 8 mandated activities districts must complete. |
| Eliminate the “grades” for plans – grades diminish partnership | The feedback format no longer assigns a “grade” to plans. The format will provide constructive feedback that is specific to the plan. |

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| Correspond with more people than just the Superintendent. | NYSED maintains a listserv specific to its Focus Districts. Anyone can request to be added to or deleted from that list serv. Send an email to fdip@nysed.gov to make such request. |
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| Additional Feedback/Recommendations for NYSED: |
| There was a request for a multi-year plan. The Department is currently piloting the multi-year plan with a select cohort of schools with the intent to scale the process up to all Focus Districts. |
| A request for a virtual learning lab was made. The Department is currently phasing in content on the DTSDE Learning lab. http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/diagnostic-tool-institute/DTSDELearningLab.html |
| A request for specific examples of practices that will leverage change was made. The Department is currently exploring the option of creating a learning panel comprised of districts and schools that have been removed from accountability status to share how they used the DCIP/SCEP process to leverage change. |