

Assembling Your Improvement Planning Team

Before beginning any needs assessment activities or improvement process, it is essential that the school leader establishes a team that will bring a variety of perspectives and ultimately assume responsibility for designing, promoting, communicating, and monitoring the continuous improvement plan and process.

Why It's Important

- It is important that members of the school community believe in the improvement plan and can mobilize around the concepts captured in the plan. This is best accomplished by ensuring that a range of voices are included in the creation of the plan.
- School leaders that recognize the value of engaging a diverse range of stakeholders and make efforts to ensure that these diverse voices are viewed as equal contributors in the development of the plan are best positioned to generate enthusiasm and ownership for the plan and the activities and initiatives identified in the plan.
- While schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI), and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) are required to develop an improvement plan and submit it for approval, the intended audience for the actual plan is the school community. The plan is not generated for the sake of the State Education Department or the District; instead, the primary purpose of the plan is to identify priorities for the upcoming year that will position the school for success so that appropriate attention can be provided to these priorities. It is important that members of the school community believe they had a voice in the development of the plan.

Meaningful Participation

- As part of the collaborative process, school leaders should consider both **WHO** is involved in the development of the plan, along with **WHAT** team members do as part of their participation in developing the plan.
- For schools identified for TSI, ATSI, and CSI, Commissioner's Regulation 100.21 requires that plans demonstrate evidence that stakeholders have meaningfully participated in the development of the plan. To meet the expectation of meaningful participation, these schools will need to fulfil the criteria outlined in [CSI, ATSI, and TSI-Specific Guidance](#).

Who to Invite

- School leaders should look to identify a cross-section of the school community. School leaders can find great insights from bringing together people that offer a range of perspectives and experiences, especially when those perspectives and experiences differ from those of the school leader. The individuals selected to participate in the improvement planning process will influence the quality of the process, perceptions about the credibility of the process, and momentum and enthusiasm around the commitments, goals, and strategies identified. It is important to the legitimacy of the plan that the school community does not perceive that those invited to participate were only selected because of their willingness to rubber stamp the school leader's ideas.
- The Improvement Planning Team should anticipate reconvening during the school year as the plan is implemented to consider if the plan is resulting in the progress initially envisioned when it was written. School leaders may want to prioritize identifying team members that will remain with the school during the upcoming year.

- Improvement plans should be developed by a team representing multiple constituencies within the school. Schools should be sure to follow any existing current local agreements concerning shared decision-making and participation on shared decision-making teams.

What Being a Team Member Entails

- The Continuous Improvement process outlined by NYSED anticipates that the school team will engage in six different activities as part of the Envision-Analyze-Listen needs assessment and plan development process:
 1. **Envision:** Exploring our Vision, Values, and Aspirations
 2. **Analyze:** Internal and External Data
 3. **Analyze:** Survey Results
 4. **Analyze:** Tenet 1 Systems and Structures Inventory
 5. **Listen:** Student Interviews
 6. **Putting the Pieces Together:** SCEP Planning Document
- Team members should participate in each of these six activities. [Additional guidance](#) is available for those participating in the CSI, ATSI, or TSI support models.
- The plan is designed to be implemented at the start of the school year and monitored throughout the year by members of the team. Those identified to participate in developing the improvement plan should also anticipate reconvening throughout the school year to discuss implementation and monitor impact.

Considerations to Promote Equity and Inclusion

While the guidance within this document is designed to encourage diverse representation, school leaders may want to put special attention toward the school's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion when bringing together stakeholders to develop the plan. As part of this, a school leader may want to consider ways to hear the voices or perspectives that have historically been underrepresented in the decision-making process. School leaders may also want to consider ways to remove barriers to participation. Some strategies schools have used in the past to remove participation barriers include offering childcare during the meeting or leveraging technology and providing a virtual meeting option. It is important that the improvement plan and process are open and accessible to the full school community. As part of this, school leaders are encouraged to consider ways to promote both inclusivity and transparency.

Teams may also find the Department's resources on [Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Practices](#) and the Board of Regents' [Framework on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in New York's Schools: A Call to Action](#) useful in exploring this topic further.

CSI, ATSI and TSI-Specific Guidance

- Schools identified for CSI, ATSI, and TSI can determine the size of the team, consistent with local collective bargaining agreements, including the minimum and maximum number; however, certain constituencies must be involved in the development of the SCEP:
 - School leaders
 - Teachers
 - At least two parents/persons in parental relation that are not employees of the school or district

- **At least one parent and two teacher representatives must be present for each of the six activities outlined above.**
- After completing the six activities, the team will be responsible for writing a plan, which includes identifying strategies, goals, and benchmarks. **At least one parent and two teacher representatives must be present for at least one of the meetings devoted to writing the plan.**
- In instances in which the district's 100.11 shared decision-making plan does not include representation from each of the stakeholders identified above, the district will need to involve the stakeholders not represented by including them in the SCEP development meetings as non-voting members and providing them opportunities to share their perspectives during these meetings.
- Schools identified for ATSI and TSI have entered that support model based on the performance of at least one subgroup within the school. These schools will need to have a means of incorporating the perspectives of both parents of students from the identified subgroup(s) and teachers responsible for students from the identified subgroup(s).
- If the school identified for ATSI or TSI already has an existing shared decision-making structure that does not include the constituencies outlined in the preceding bullet, the SCEP Development Team will need to be sure to consult each of these constituencies during the development and finalization of the SCEP. Districts shall return any plan that does not demonstrate sufficient outreach with the consistency groups representing the identified subgroup(s).
- Meetings should be scheduled at times and locations accessible for team members.
- Meetings should incorporate child-care and translation services when applicable. Title I 1003 School Improvement Grant Planning funds can be used for this purpose.