

Tool 5

Effectiveness Indicator Overview

The 10 Effectiveness Indicators are the foundation of the on-site school review process. These indicators have been validated by research and by more than 5 years of reviews in schools at all grade levels. Each effectiveness indicator is defined by between 5 and 12 Characteristics. Research-based rubrics enable the review team to determine the extent to which each characteristic of each indicator is, or is not, in place within a school. Every rubric is tied to specific questions asked during the review and to evidence and documentation gathered before and during the visit.

Effectiveness Indicator 1: Written Curriculum

The written curriculum is the foundation of the school's instructional program. An on-site school review examines the written curriculum to gauge its alignment with state content standards; its horizontal and vertical alignment; its alignment with instructional materials; the supports available for it, such as assessments and interventions; and the degree to which it is implemented in classrooms every day.

Five characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 1: Written Curriculum:

- 1A. The written curriculum is aligned to state standards or the standards of national disciplinary organizations.
- 1B. The written curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned.
- 1C. Textbooks and other instructional materials are aligned with the written curriculum.
- 1D. Formative and summative assessments are identified in the written curriculum.
- 1E. Intervention and enrichment materials are identified in the written curriculum.

Effectiveness Indicator 2: Instructional Program

The instructional program is clearly the reason for which the school exists—its core mission. An on-site school review looks at the instructional program as a whole, focusing on its rigor (access, challenge, and support for all students), its flexibility (individualized tools, strategies, and assessments for all students), and the supports it provides for teachers (curriculum cohesion, professional collaboration, and instructional leadership).

Ten characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 2: Instructional Program:

- 2A. Teachers integrate content standards into classroom instruction.
- 2B. The instructional program is rigorous and provides access, challenge, and support for all students.
- 2C. Teachers expect all students to make substantial learning gains each year, and students have high expectations of themselves.
- 2D. Teachers organize instruction to support clearly articulated and communicated learning targets.
- 2E. Teachers provide students with activities and assignments that are rigorous and engaging and that extend their learning.
- 2F. Teachers have deep knowledge of their subject matter, possess expertise in a wide range of effective instructional strategies, and are committed to closing achievement gaps.
- 2G. Teachers plan together to ensure that instruction and assessment meet the needs of all learners.

- 2H. Instructional time is fully and effectively used.
- 2I. School administrators support and promote effective instructional practices, program coordination, and resource allocation.
- 2J. School administrators ensure that the taught curriculum reflects the written curriculum and aligns with the pacing charts.

Effectiveness Indicator 3: Student Assessment

Student assessment can be used to determine individual students' levels of specific knowledge and skills; to improve classroom instruction; to adapt instruction or prescribe interventions for individuals or groups of students; to evaluate and improve larger instructional programs; and to measure and compare schools, districts, and states for broad public accountability. An on-site school review examines the range and quality of a school's assessment system.

Six characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 3: Student Assessment:

- 3A. Local assessments are aligned to the cognitive demand of the standards and to the written curriculum.
- 3B. Teachers employ a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies.
- 3C. Diagnostic assessments are used to identify student skill levels and to determine appropriate interventions or remediations.
- 3D. Data from diagnostic assessments are used to place, group, and regroup students.
- 3E. Aggregated and disaggregated data from state assessments are used to improve the school's curriculum and instructional program.
- 3F. State and local student assessment data are collected, disseminated, and readily available.

Effectiveness Indicator 4: School Leadership

Effective leaders create a school climate in which academic achievement is the primary goal, and they ensure that policies, procedures, and resources support that goal. An on-site school review examines the role of school administrators in developing, implementing, and maintaining improvement efforts that are focused on student learning.

Twelve characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 4: School Leadership:

- 4A. School administrators provide leadership in strategic planning.
- 4B. School administrators create a culture of high expectations for student and adult success and support those beliefs schoolwide.
- 4C. School administrators see student learning as the foremost priority for the school.
- 4D. School administrators ensure that adequate resources are allocated to achieve school improvement goals.
- 4E. School leadership is distributed schoolwide.
- 4F. School administrators recognize staff members' accomplishments, expertise, and leadership potential.
- 4G. School administrators encourage and promote collaborative relationships.
- 4H. School administrators address existing and potential conflicts.

- 4I. School administrators are accessible and model optimism, integrity, fairness, and respect.
- 4J. School administrators are adaptable and encourage innovation.
- 4K. School administrators ensure that teachers receive constructive feedback through periodic observation, coaching, and lesson study.
- 4L. School administrators provide formal staff evaluations.

Effectiveness Indicator 5: Strategic Planning

Certain organizational elements must be in place for the planning process to provide the maximum benefit to the school. An on-site school review examines how the plan is created, what its focus is, who is part of the process, how the plan is implemented, and how it is evaluated.

Eight characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 5: Strategic Planning:

- 5A. There is a process in place, and support for, schoolwide strategic planning.
- 5B. The strategic plan is focused on student learning and refining teaching practices.
- 5C. As a part of strategic planning, student demographic and achievement data are reviewed and analyzed.
- 5D. A research-driven approach is used to identify problems and solutions.
- 5E. Extensive communication ensures that all stakeholders are a part of the decision-making process.
- 5F. An action plan describes the steps to be taken toward attainment of the goals.
- 5G. The strategic plan is put into action with fidelity.
- 5H. The school monitors progress toward attainment of the goals and makes adjustments when appropriate.

Effectiveness Indicator 6: Professional Development

The professional development program is centered on ensuring that all children learn to high levels. In effective schools, professional development deepens and refines teachers' knowledge and skills in content and pedagogy. An on-site school review examines the professional development program to find if it is based on student outcome data and is collaborative, sustained, intensive, and closely tied to the classroom. The review also looks at whether the program addresses teacher needs, including those of teachers new to the profession.

Eight characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 6: Professional Development:

- 6A. The professional development program is focused on improving student learning by deepening the knowledge and skills of educators in their subject matter and in pedagogy.
- 6B. The professional development program is based on an analysis of student achievement data and learning needs, is coherent with state standards, and complements the instructional program.
- 6C. Professional development is collaborative, is job-embedded, and addresses both individual and schoolwide needs.
- 6D. Professional development is ongoing and sustained over time.
- 6E. Professional development builds cultural proficiency.

- 6F. Professional development explicitly addresses the needs of teachers new to the profession.
- 6G. The professional development program has adequate resources.
- 6H. An evaluation of program effectiveness is an integral part of professional development.

Effectiveness Indicator 7: Student Connectedness, Engagement, and Readiness

Feeling a connection to their school, their peers, and the adults within their school provides an important safety net for students. Students who feel connected are much more likely to stay in school despite obstacles they may face along the way. Extracurricular activities play an important role in these feelings of connection. When students begin to falter, there are mechanisms in place to quickly reach out to them with targeted assistance. Students move seamlessly from one school to another in the district because there is a high level of communication and coordination between schools. An on-site school review looks at the extent of all of these efforts to keep students in school until they graduate.

Seven characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 7: Student Connectedness, Engagement, and Readiness:

- 7A. Students feel connected to their school.
- 7B. Students have positive, trusting, and caring relationships with adults and peers in the school.
- 7C. Extracurricular activities are numerous and varied, providing ample opportunities for all students to participate.
- 7D. The school has mechanisms and programs to identify and meet the academic and social service needs of students at risk of not completing school.
- 7E. A system of schoolwide, targeted, and intensive interventions meets the needs of students at risk.
- 7F. Secondary schools provide alternative options to students in order to increase graduation rates.
- 7G. There is coordination and curricular alignment within and among feeder-pattern schools to ensure that students are prepared for transition to the next grade or school.

Effectiveness Indicator 8: School Environment

An on-site school review looks for the combination of warmth and academic challenge that is the key to a positive school environment. Such an environment is strongly associated with student success. There is respect between all stakeholders. Faculty and staff members skillfully meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Behavior management systems focus first on instruction and intervention, resulting in an environment that is orderly but not unduly regimented.

Nine characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 8: School Environment:

- 8A. School administrators foster a positive school environment in which students and staff members feel valued, students are challenged to grow academically, and staff members are challenged to grow professionally.
- 8B. The school and its physical environment are safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning.
- 8C. A culture of trust and respect exists at all levels of the school community.
- 8D. Staff members work effectively with racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students.
- 8E. Positive character traits are taught and reinforced as part of the instructional program.

- 8F. An effective discipline and behavior management system supports teaching and learning schoolwide.
- 8G. School administrators and staff members actively support the discipline and behavior management system.
- 8H. School rules are fair and are applied consistently and equitably. Consequences are commensurate with the offense.
- 8I. Out-of-school suspensions are reserved for only the most serious offenses, and suspended students are allowed to continue the academic program.

Effectiveness Indicator 9: Family and Community Involvement

In effective schools, there are programs in place to engage families and the community in supporting student learning. An on-site school review assesses the commitment of the school, its families, and its community to developing partnerships for the benefit of the students. It examines both the school's outreach efforts and the families' and community's involvement in, and ownership of, the school.

Five characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 9: Family and Community Involvement:

- 9A. Families and the community feel positive about, and welcome at, the school.
- 9B. The school maintains high levels of communication with families and the community.
- 9C. The school seeks and values family and community involvement.
- 9D. The school engages families and the community to support student learning.
- 9E. School administrators cultivate shared responsibility for decision-making among families and within the community.

Effectiveness Indicator 10: District Support

The board and district determine the context within which schools function and the culture within which they operate. Effective districts are committed above all else to setting and supporting goals for high levels of student learning, and the board and superintendent work together to emphasize this priority. An on-site school review evaluates the district's leadership in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment between and within grade levels, districtwide. It also examines the district's performance in committing resources to its goals and in using data to evaluate progress toward those goals.

Six characteristics define Effectiveness Indicator 10: District Support:

- 10A. The roles and responsibilities of the board, the district, and the schools are clear and communicated to stakeholders.
- 10B. The board's, district's, and schools' goals, policies, and resource allocations are aligned and focus on student learning.
- 10C. The district oversees the development and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment districtwide.
- 10D. The board's and district's policies and actions reflect the expectation that all children in the district will be engaged in high-quality instruction and assessment.
- 10E. The board's and district's actions reflect high expectations of staff members.
- 10F. The board and district use data to monitor school and student performance and intervene if school performance lags.