Appendix D

From the Needs Assessment to the District Improvement Plan

Below is an example of one priority need a district selected for its improvement plan. How do the individual parts in the needs assessment (priority need, improvement areas and root cause) help the district write a comprehensive improvement plan?

Example: One Priority Need, Root Cause and Additional Improvement Areas

Community and Family Engagement

No Needs Have Been Identified.

College and Career Readiness

Improvement Area: College Career Readiness

Priority Need: Career Connections

Root Cause: We have limited opportunities for our students to experience a variety of careers. Our specialized populations also have the challenges associated with their specialized areas. We need to develop a system from grades 2-7 for career introduction and experiences so that these experiences become an integral part of our curriculum and instruction. Embedding such activities within our unit plans for ELA, Science and SS would increase opportunities as well as allow us to be proactive with our specialized populations. Planning in advance for the experience and the supports would create greater success. For grades 7-11, we need to expand opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience on fields they have demonstrated an interest in beginning with exploratory at the middle school level to greater immersion activities in the 10-12 grade levels. Developing greater connections within our business community is essential for this. Finally, we need a staff member to help with the coordination and organization of this across the district. This staff member must be able to work with our curriculum staff and business community.

Additional Improvement Areas: Community Family Engagement; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Professional Capital

School Climate and Supports

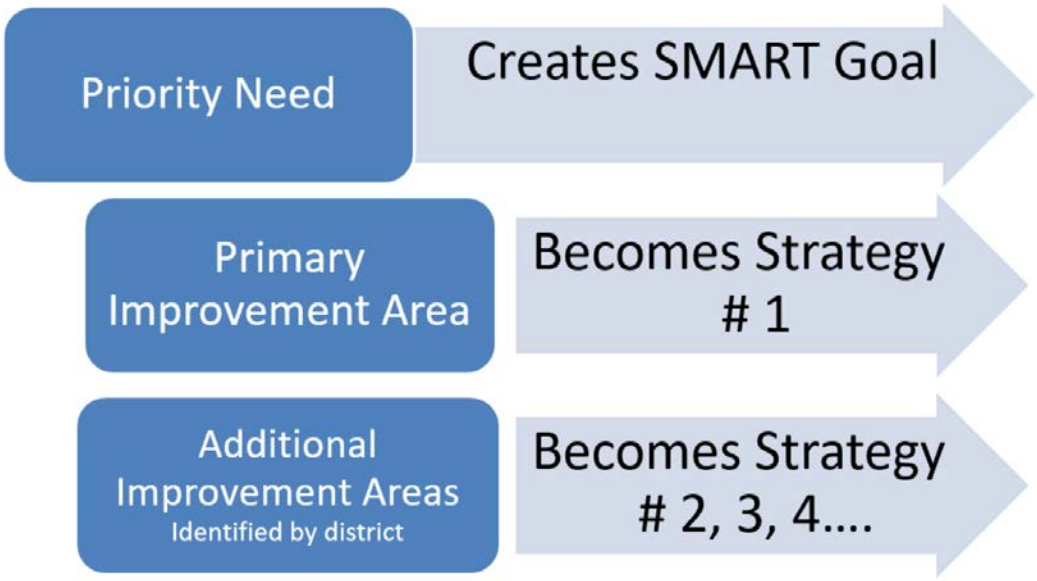
No Needs Have Been Identified.

First let's consider the different parts of the needs assessment and planning tool. In the One Needs Assessment, the sections, groups and root cause are known by most of us as priority needs and improvement areas with the root cause stating the underlying factors that have led to a district challenge becoming a priority need.

The One Needs Assessment consists of **Sections** (Improvement Areas), **Groups** (Priority Needs), **Root Cause** (Underlying Factors Resulting in a Need) and **Additional Sections (**Additional Improvement Areas).

The Planning Tool consists of ***SMART Goals, Strategies, Action Steps***, as well as an **Adult Implementation Measure, Student Measure** and **Fiscal Resources**.

BIG Picture



As you begin writing your plan, consider that the priority needs of the district become the foundation for the development of the SMART goal. Each improvement area then becomes the foundation for the strategies to meet the SMART goal. Since the improvement areas are the areas that need to be addressed to impact outcomes resulting in progress toward the goal, it would make sense that they become the strategies for the district. Action steps are then added to provide information detailing how the district will implement the strategy. Let's look at the Career Connections priority need shown above and see how that may look in a plan with all the parts from the needs assessment.

Example: SMART Goal, Strategies, Action Steps

1. SMART Goal: ABC School District will increase students' knowledge of careers and the connections to their learning through integrated unit lessons in core subjects and demonstrated with quarterly student activities/projects by 2023 for grades 6-10. Benchmarks: 2021 – 1 unit and project/activity, 2022 – 2 units and project/activity, 2023 3 units and project/activity.

    1.1 Strategy: College and Career Readiness: Career Connections – (Students will become aware of possible careers through community partnerships, Ohio Means Jobs and project/activities completed in core subject unit lessons).
        - 1.1.1 The school will develop a relationship with local businesses and the chamber of commerce to evaluate needed skills for current jobs available in the area by June 2021.
        - 1.1.2 Students in grades 6-10 will enroll and utilize the Ohio Means Job website to assist with projects and activities, as well as plan for their futures related to occupations they are interested in.

    1.2 Strategy: Community Family Engagement

1.2.1 Beginning in grade 6, parents will be involved in planning for their children's future coursework through parent scheduling meetings.
1.2.2 An informational meeting concerning the current and future job market, along with skill sets employers need will be provided to parents.
1.2.3 An annual job market will be created with community partners by 2022 for parents and students to participate in.

1.3 Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

1.3.1 2021: Teachers in grades 6-10 will work together to cross-reference standards and possible occupations related to standards taught in core subject areas at each grade level and develop an integrated unit lesson that includes a career connection project/activity for spring quarter.
1.3.2 2022: Teachers in grades 6-10 will work together to cross-reference standards and possible occupations related to standards taught in core subject areas at each grade level and develop a second integrated unit lesson that includes a career connection project/activity for winter quarter.
1.3.3 2023: Teachers in grades 6-10 will work together to cross-reference standards and possible occupations related to standards taught in core subject areas at each grade level and develop a third integrated unit lesson that includes a career connection project/activity for fall quarter.

1.4 Professional Capital

1.4.1 The district will hire a Career Connections Coordinator to work with teachers, area businesses, the chamber of commerce, students and parents to develop career connections for grades 6-10.
1.4.2 Staff in grades 6-8 will participate in professional development that involves curriculum alignment across subject areas to determine common skills/knowledge sets in core subject areas and current job market.
1.4.3 Staff will participate in career awareness activities to gain a greater understanding of the required skills, knowledge base and work-based interactions employers need in today's work environment.

The framework provided to districts will help with the transition of priority needs to a plan of action in the Continuous Improvement Plan. The hope is to provide a framework that is easy to follow, makes sense and directly connects to the identified needs during the needs assessment process. Districts are free to use different frameworks in their plans but must remember that goals, strategies and action steps must be supported by a stated need in the needs assessment. As you work through the needs assessment questions and root cause, staying mindful of the final product should help the decision-making process.