

Design Questions for Diagnostic Review, Supports & Interventions, and Rewards

The questions below will help guide the structure of the work remaining. Currently, WI's Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is based upon a continuum of high performing schools, districts with schools with flat achievement and/or declining achievement and districts identified for improvement (DIFI), have persistently low achieving (PLA) schools (lowest 5% of schools in the state) and/or schools identified for improvement (SIFIs). Please review the questions, options, and considerations below. The options listed are intended to start conversations; they are hardly exhaustive of the possibilities. Feel free to select multiple options or devise your own. CCSSO definitions and background on diagnostic review, supports & interventions, and rewards can be found on pages 7-9. Also, keep in mind what the state panel presented in terms of their SSOS when responding to these questions.

Diagnostic Review

1. Which schools and districts should undergo a state-approved diagnostic review?

- Only persistently low achieving schools (PLAs) and are required to submit a reform plan and findings to DPI for approval.
- All low achieving schools (PLAs and SIFIs) as well as moderately achieving schools that have lost significant ground during the past year.
- All low achieving schools, moderately achieving schools that have lost significant ground, and schools that have shown some growth but have not achieved expected growth during the past year.
- All high performing (rewards) schools in order to disseminate best practices/model programs to low performing schools.
- None – a state-approved diagnostic review should not exist for any school. Districts should specify their own policies on school review to determine causes of low or high performance.
- Other _____

Considerations:

- While focusing on the lowest performing schools may be necessary due to budget constraints, also conducting diagnostic reviews for mid-level performing schools may help to identify problems early on and arrest further descent into low performance. Likewise, conducting a diagnostic review for schools identified as high performing will help to identify successful practices that may have value if used more broadly.

2. Who should be responsible for conducting the diagnostic review? (Select one.)

- Diagnostic reviews should be conducted by the state. The diagnostic review should be comprised of an automated reporting process where a set list of measures and metrics are reported from the school and district and analyzed at the state level to determine supports and interventions.
- A third party review team should conduct diagnostic reviews.
- A peer network should be established for diagnostic review. Teams of principals or other school personnel could be organized to evaluate each other's schools to build capacity and promote mutual accountability.
- None – a state-approved diagnostic review should not exist for any school. Districts should specify their own policies on school review to determine causes of low or high performance.
- Other _____

Considerations:

- School or district capacity to conduct an objective review of their own practices may be limited.
- Beware conflicts of interest between district staff and/or intermediate service centers and the schools or districts under review since PD relationships exist among them (e.g. if on-going professional development is provided by the same entity that is conducting the review).
- During a previous Design Team meeting, there was general group consensus that the progress of the lowest performing 25% of schools should be measured for inclusion in school determinations.

3. What evidence or components of school performance should be considered? Consider the following options for the scope of the diagnostic review (Select one.):

- A broad review should be conducted. The diagnostic review should enable a review team to collect information to assess school progress towards general goals of public education. As defined in Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder (2008) the eight general goals of public education are:
 - Basic academic knowledge and skills: basic skills in reading, writing, and math, and knowledge of science and history.
 - Critical thinking and problem solving: the ability to analyze information, apply ideas to new situations, and develop knowledge using computers.
 - Appreciation of the arts and literature: participation in and appreciation of musical, visual, and performing arts as well as a love of literature
 - Preparation for skilled employment: workplace qualification for students not pursuing college education.
 - Social skills and work ethic: communication skills, personal responsibility, and the ability to get along with others from varied backgrounds.
 - Citizenship and community responsibility: public ethics; knowledge of how government works; and participation by voting, volunteering, and becoming active in community life.
 - Physical health: good habits of exercise and nutrition.
 - Emotional health: self-confidence, respect for others, and the ability to resist peer pressure to engage in irresponsible personal behavior.
- A more focused set of qualitative indicators should be selected on which all schools selected for diagnostic review are evaluated.
- Within certain state defined parameters, schools and districts should have the ability to select indicators on which to be reviewed.
- Other _____

Considerations:

- Evidence or components of school performance could include but are not limited to professional development, educator effectiveness, governance, leadership, curriculum used to implement standards, data to inform decisions about instruction and overall school operation, classroom observations/instruction, school climate/safety, and family, school, & community partnerships.
- Decisions on the components included in the diagnostic review should reflect both the situation of low-performing schools and high-performing schools: areas where low-performing schools are known to struggle should be included, as well as components where best practices can be identified in schools identified as high performing.

- Ohio example: As diagnostic review is conducted, school practices are compared with practices of high-performing Ohio schools in the following areas: Alignment of Standards, Instructional Practice, Environment and Climate, System of Leadership, Professional Development, and Data-Driven Decisions (Ohio Department of Education, 2011)..

Supports and Interventions

4. **How should supports and interventions be assigned based on the diagnostic review? (Select one.)** It is assumed that research based supports and interventions will be selected and implemented with fidelity based on needs identified through the diagnostic review.
- Only PLAs are required to implement an improvement plan that includes supports and interventions determined and monitored by the state. While all other schools maintain flexibility in determining appropriate supports and interventions.
 - All** low achieving schools, moderately achieving schools that have lost significant ground and schools that have shown some growth but have not achieved expected growth are required to implement an improvement plan that includes supports and interventions determined and monitored by the state. While schools designated as high performing will have flexibility.
 - Control over of selection of supports and interventions will not solely be dictated by a school’s determination. Each aspect of diagnostic review may trigger a specific support or intervention regardless of whether a school identified as low, moderate or high. (e.g. insufficient academic growth in student subgroup.)
 - Other configuration _____

Considerations:

A balance should be struck between what the accountability system requires and what the state can support financially. Availability and cost of resources and the ability to support districts should be considered.

MA example: After being designated in one of five levels during the determinations process, a school receives varying levels of monitoring and oversight from the SEA based on this designation. Schools designated in the bottom two levels receive: a liaison to coordinate interventions, interventions strategies and progress benchmarks provided, (level four) and joint district and SEA governance (level five). Previous Design Team discussions indicated that the accountability system should have as a goal to improve performance for all publicly-funded Wisconsin students, regardless of eligibility for Title I funding.

5. **What specific interventions should be required as part of school reform plans? (Check all that apply)**
- Extended learning (300+ hours)
 - Response to Intervention, including implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
 - Professional development/educator effectiveness aligned to identified needs
 - External experts/vendors assisting with interventions targeted to reading and mathematics
 - Family engagement strategies
 - School turnaround (staff replacement; leadership change)
 - Other _____
 - Other _____

6. What specific interventions should be required for PLAs (lowest 5%) to implement? (Check all that apply)

- Turnaround models:
 - i. Conversion to Charter School
 - ii. Significant staff replacement
 - iii. Leadership change/operational flexibility
 - iv. Closure
- State authority to intervene at the school and/or district level (e.g., finances, hiring, curricular decisions, etc.) to assist in the implementation of school reform plans and turnaround models
- Assistance provided by state-approved vendors to implement school reform plans and turnaround models
- Less flexibility from the district level regarding staffing, allocation of resources and core curriculum being implemented in the PLA school.
- Other _____
- Other _____

7. How should the state monitor implementation of school plans aligned to diagnostic reviews? How should low performing schools be monitored? (Check all that apply.)

- Onsite visits, monitoring of school plans, review of school data, and fiscal monitoring for all schools
- Onsite visits, monitoring of school plans, review of school data, and fiscal monitoring for PLAs; online monitoring of school plans, review of school data and fiscal monitoring for all other schools (no onsite visits).
- Onsite visits, monitoring of school plans, review of school data, and fiscal monitoring for only PLAs.
- Other configuration/components _____

Considerations:

District as well as intermediate service center (i.e. CESA) capacity to provide monitoring should be considered. Resources would need to be allocated for intensive monitoring such as onsite visits.

Should monitoring occur for all schools, or should fewer schools be monitored and provided with greater supports?

Rewards

8. How should high performing schools be rewarded? (Select all that apply.)

- Public recognition
- Flexibility in operation and use of state funds
- Eligible for funding opportunities to enhance school improvement efforts and disseminate best practices.
- Financial
 - Monetary reward given at the school level with a designated purpose (e.g. direct staff bonuses)
 - Monetary reward given at the school level without a designated purpose
- Other _____

Considerations:

Availability of funding for all schools or only Title schools?

Florida example:

- Cash awards are given to schools that earn an A grade or improve a letter grade, such as going from a C to a B. The state awards these bonuses, originally \$100 per student (\$75 in FY2010), directly to schools and the majority of funds (over 80%) are used to provide bonuses to teachers and staff. (Foundation for Excellence in Education, 2011).
- Bonuses (\$700) given to schools for every student who passes an AP exam, with additional bonus for D or F schools with students who pass an AP exam.

Georgia example: The state offers districts the opportunity to enter into contracts with the state board of education and SEA exchanging increased district accountability (beyond minimum NCLB-related measures) for increased district flexibility and autonomy. (CCSSO Roadmap, p. 32)

9. What should the state’s role be with high performing schools?

- Onsite visits with manageable sample of schools to observe model programs
- Review of results of diagnostic reviews (regardless if this a requirement)
- The state does not need to play a role with these schools beyond the initial rewards outlined above in #8.
- Other _____

Funding the System: Prioritization of Recommended Components

10. How should the state prioritize funding beyond Title I schools within the system among these categories? (Rank them 1 through 4)

- Continuing improvement in all schools through the use of statewide diagnostic reviews, supports, and rewards (no targeted supports or interventions, but similar levels to all schools)
- Identifying low performing schools, requiring a diagnostic review, and implementing supports (targeting to a larger number of low performing schools).
- Identifying persistently low performing schools, requiring a diagnostic review, and implementing supports and interventions (targeting to the schools that are persistently low performing).
- Identifying high performing schools, conducting a diagnostic review, and providing rewards (targeting to high performing schools).
- What other configuration or approach to funding do you recommend?

Considerations:

- Should priority be given to more schools with less intensive supports and interventions or to fewer schools with more intensive support?
- Is additional legislation necessary to enact the type of supports and interventions chosen?

Diagnostic Reviews, Supports & Interventions, and Rewards:

Definitions and Background

Adapted in large part from the Roadmap for Next-Generation Accountability Systems, Council of Chief State School Officers, June 17, 2011 Working Draft, Edition One

The Wisconsin Accountability Design Team has been tasked with advancing a next generation accountability system for Wisconsin's publicly funded schools and districts. Since its convening in August, the Team has worked to design elements of the system including performance objectives, a definition of college and career readiness, measures of student performance outcomes, annual determinations for schools and districts, and ways to enact transparent reporting. During the November meeting, the Design Team will focus attention on three additional components of the accountability system: **1) diagnostic reviews 2) supports and interventions to facilitate improvement and 3) rewards for high performance**. This briefing memorandum provides information about these components, including key questions for the Design Team to consider in these areas.

Diagnostic Reviews

According to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) diagnostic reviews “essentially “x-ray” schools in order to determine appropriate diagnoses.

Diagnostic reviews are *“a more comprehensive picture of school and district performance [than what is provided by determinations based solely on student performance data] and therefore provide more targeted and effective supports and interventions where needed. Diagnostic reviews recognize the importance of high-quality instructional and operational processes to increasing student achievement and enable the state and districts to evaluate these to gain a clearer and deeper picture of the policies, practices, and conditions affecting student performance and the opportunities for improvement” (CCSSO Roadmap p. 27).*

According to CCSSO, diagnostic reviews *should*:

- **Conduct diagnostic reviews based on quality standards based on research and known best practices** in key areas that the state believes may affect student achievement, such as governance and leadership, curriculum that implements sound standards, the use of data to inform instruction, and community engagement, among others.
- **Be timed so that they inform supports and interventions.** School reviews should occur after determinations, but before final decisions are made about supports and interventions to schools and districts. Diagnostic reviews should help schools and districts create more “nuanced, targeted, and timely” supports and interventions.
- **Require at least low-performing schools undergo a diagnostic review. Use existing accreditation procedures/best accreditation practices.** Align school and district review procedures if they exist with the new diagnostic review process, so that efforts are not duplicative.

CCSSO offers the following additional design options:

- **Employ independent, third-party reviewers for the external review.** If state or district level capacity constraints exist, consider use of independent, third-party reviewers for external review.

- **Include relevant state and federal requirements in the review process.** Be aligned to any existing state and federal monitoring for maximum efficiency and relevance.
- **Inform classifications.** The results of diagnostic reviews should inform classification of schools and districts and ultimately lead to targeted supports and interventions.
- **Encompass the examination of early learning opportunities and other community-based supports.** In order to provide nuance and context in the review, consider factors that may affect student achievement within the community, such as early education, prevalence of family engagement, child care options and other community supports.

Supports and Interventions

Regarding **supports and interventions**, The CCSSO Roadmap states that *“Informed by its classification system, a next-generation accountability system must provide supports and interventions that are well-matched to both the strengths and weaknesses of schools and districts. In tailoring supports and interventions to specific schools and districts, the state must recognize that schools and districts have different needs and will require different supports and interventions. Priority of attention and resources must go to the lowest-performing schools and districts, and failure to improve must result in significant, systemic action, but the state must build a system of supports that can help drive continuous improvement across the full range of schools and districts as well”* (CCSSO Roadmap, p. 31).

According to CCSSO, Supports and Interventions *should*:

- **Target intensive, systemic supports to the lowest performing schools as identified by both overall student performance and the largest gaps in subgroup performance.** Resources should be allocated in a way that is sustainable to ensure long-term support for turning around the lowest-performing schools. Since districts serve as a core partner in these efforts, district capacity for this work should be assessed and strengthened as needed.
- **Provide a range of general and specific supports that can be aligned to school needs across the continuum of performance.** Monitor fidelity of implementation so that the validity of research-based interventions can be maintained.

CCSSO offers the following additional design options:

- **Place importance on a strong model of delivery that will ensure the coordinated and sustained implementation of the supports and interventions.** Provide schools and districts with clear guidance for selecting appropriate supports and intervention.
- **Analyze incentives created by supports and interventions to assess their potential – and then actual - effectiveness and consider their motivational or punitive nature before and after they are implemented.** The potential impact on stakeholder behavior– district and school staff, teachers, parents, students – should be well thought-through initially and then continuously evaluated to determine if changes in behavior were as expected and if unintended consequences emerged.
- **Address the needs of moderately low-performing schools and districts before they become chronically low-performing.** By addressing identified problems early, states may be able to purposefully address issues and prevent a slide to significant underperformance.
- **Include interventions and supports for students and teachers..** All supports and interventions already offered at the school level to students and teachers should be aligned to any supports or interventions that arise from the accountability system. Student and teacher evaluation should be taken into consideration in the design of the overall accountability system so that efforts can be aligned from the SEA to the individual in the school.

- **Consider more far-reaching and fundamental efforts to enhance and mobilize communities, families, early education programs and other partners to complement the influence of school improvement initiatives.** While the focus is on the school, district, and state role in improving student achievement, research tells us that families, communities, and other programs have a large impact on student achievement.

Rewards

While the CCSSO *Roadmap for Next-Generation Accountability Systems* considers rewards one type of support or intervention that can be offered to schools and districts, the Accountability Design Team has expressed an interest in studying rewards separately in order to ensure that enough emphasis is placed on strategic practices of encouraging and maintaining high performance while still keeping a dual focus on supporting the lowest performing schools and considering incentives for improvement in all school and districts.

According to CCSSO, rewards *should*:

- **Capture the institutional efforts that appear to be associated with high performing schools and districts so that their best practices may be studied and considered for replication.** Within high performing districts and schools, efforts should be made to document the defined processes and structures that seem to be functioning well and leading to high performance as well as attempting to document the intangible elements of the environment – culture, staff relationships with leadership, etc. - that may be contributing to performance.