

# A Recommended Approach for Developing a School Improvement Plan

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The following approach to development of a school improvement plan is systematic, data-driven, and research-based. The school leadership team is not required to use the USOE approach or template for developing the school improvement plan unless the school is in Corrective Action or Restructuring. However, all the necessary components that are required by NCLB are included in this approach and template. If the school leadership team chooses to use their own template, refer to the checklist to ensure all required components are included. Make sure the plan (a) addresses teacher mentoring, the 10% requirement for professional development, and parent involvement, (b) has an adequate research base, and includes a signature page indicating the involvement of a wide representation of interested parties.

## **Part A: Convene a Leadership Team and Hire a School Support Team**

The leadership team must include the principal, at least one faculty member, one parent (who is not a member of the school staff), and one representative from the LEA (who may be the Title I director). These are minimum requirements. Be sure to include enough members in the SST and leadership team to represent all interested parties. All members must sign in Part A. The leadership team must hire a school support team.

The selection of the School Support Team (SST) is the responsibility of the school's leadership team. SST members shall be external to the school. This means that no one who serves as an administrator, teacher, assistant, pupil services personnel or parent of a child in the school may serve as a School Support Team member for that school. The composition of the SST must be directly related to the reason the school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – i.e., if English language learner (ELL) students are not achieving, the SST should have ELL expertise – and should include both content and programmatic expertise. The team members may change as the school goes through the appraisal and implementation process, but there must be a minimum of three members at all times.

At least one person from the LEA should be a member of the SST team, particularly for the plan development processes. This LEA SST member may be the same LEA representative on the leadership team mentioned in paragraph one. In the event that the LEA and the school are the same entity, this requirement is waived. The SST *must have a minimum of three people*.

## **Part B: Collect School Data**

Data should be collected to give a clear picture of the school as a whole and to describe the factors that contributed to the school improvement status. Do not rely on CRT data alone. Look for root causes that may be limiting certain groups of students.

Data sources:

- AYP data analysis
- Other assessment data
- Survey results
- Current demographic information
- Demographic trends
- Existing programs and the accompanying evaluation
- All funding sources
- Programs with completed evaluations
- Attendance
- Tardiness
- Graduation rate
- Discipline/behavior

While considering the need for school improvement, there are seven categories that have been confirmed to impact student achievement in varying degrees. These categories are: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Professional Development, Leadership, Parent and Community Involvement, and School Climate and Culture.

See Section 7-4 of this document to find a self-assessment needs analysis of the school. This self-assessment may be used to formulate stakeholder surveys or focus group questions. Answering these questions and using the analysis of collected data will assist the SST and school leadership teams identify school improvement needs and begin to think about possible goals and strategies that will improve student achievement.

## **Part C: Conduct the USOE School Appraisal (Required for Schools in Corrective Action)**

Refer to Sections 4, 5, and 6 of the USOE Title I School Improvement School Support Team Handbook.

## **Part D: Choose Goals and Strategies**

Step 1: After analyzing school data and completing the school appraisal, the SST and leadership team may have identified concerns in areas that hinder student achievement. These concerns should lead to the setting of a few goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-based (SMART). These

goals must be targeted toward specific improvements in the content areas and for the subgroups in which the school was identified for improvement.

Please write goals in statements that describe desired results or changes expected by a specific point in time. Remember, the team is writing a two-year plan.

Step 2: For each goal, determine strategies or strategies that are most likely to help the school meet its improvement goals. In selecting strategies, the SST and leadership team should consider:

- The direct relationship between the strategies, the goals, and the desired outcomes.
- The research supporting the effectiveness of chosen strategies.
- The likelihood that chosen strategies will be effective in the school for student needs.
- Professional development that will be needed to support the strategies and goals.

When describing each activity, include the research base, the intended impact, the required professional development, those responsible, and the evaluation process.

Consider the school's budget for this plan, which is included in Part G.

Use the following School Improvement Goals and Strategies Form found on the next page to guide planning.

**School Improvement Goal and Strategies Form (Complete one for each goal.)**

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**School Improvement Goal: Goals must be directly related to the reasons the school did not make adequate yearly progress and directly tied to the Utah State Core Curriculum. Goals must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Based (SMART) (Sec. 116(b)(3)(A)(v)).**

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Goal

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Strategies to accomplish the goal

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Scientifically Based Research to Support Strategies  
(Sec. 116(b)(3)(A)(i))

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Expected Impact in Core Academic Areas (Sec. 116(b)(3)(A)(i))

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Professional Development to Support Strategies  
(Sec. 116(b)(3)(A)(iii and iv))

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Timeline  
(Sec. 116(b)(3)(A))

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Responsible Parties  
(Sec. 116(b)(3)(A)(vii))

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Evaluation of the impact of the selected strategies on student achievement in core academic areas

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## **Part E: Design the Professional Development in More Detail**

Professional development is a required part of each school improvement plan. The leadership team must spend at least 10% of the Title I budget on professional development. This professional development must be aligned with the chosen goals. It should be based on scientific research and proven to have an impact on student achievement. Professional development should be offered to paraprofessionals as well as professionals to ensure consistency in knowledge and practice among all instructional staff.

The professional development plan must include a mentoring component. The mentoring component may be provided by experienced educators, core-content coaches, or Title I staff. The mentoring component must be clear in the plan.

Professional development must target provision of services to all students by highly qualified teachers. Indicate how the school will comply with this aspect of the law.

## **Part F: Include Parents in the Plan**

Parents are an integral part of the success of every child. Title I requires each school to include parents in the education of their children in multiple ways.

The leadership team must inform parents of the school's improvement status. This communication must be clear, include consequences of the designation such as choice and supplemental services, and be in a language and format easily accessible to parents. Please attach copies of these communications to the plan.

Parents should also be involved directly in the education of their children. The school leadership team and SST should consider the involvement of parents, especially parents of low-achieving students, when making the plan. Parents can be involved in decision-making processes (such as the planning SST and leadership team), as volunteers within the school day, and as support for individual children at home. The school can support parents through parenting programs and adult education. The plans to provide or enhance these services must be described in the plan.

## **Part F: Examine the Budget**

The school improvement budget must reflect a commitment to the strategies being adopted to improve student achievement. The strategies must be targeted toward the specific reasons the school did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, the regular school program. An amount equal to 10% of the school-wide Title IA allocation must be spent on professional development. Review the NCLB budget and revise it if necessary. Attach the school improvement budget request using the Utah State Office of Education Application for Financial Assistance available online at: <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/nclb/documents/xls/NCLBbudgtemp.xls>.

## Part G: Write an Abstract

When the school improvement plan is completed, write an abstract of the plan that includes the elements listed below. Please keep the following in mind while writing.

- Abstracts are an overview of the improvement plan.
- Abstracts present key elements clearly and concisely.
- Abstracts do not include data graphs or tables, nor references.
- Abstracts should be clear and easy to read, with enough detail to help the reader understand the focus of the plan.
- Sentences should flow logically.
- The abstract should be written with correct English-language grammar and spelling.
- Limit the abstract to three paragraphs or one page.

Elements:

- Describe the context of the school.
- Explain the areas in which the school did not make adequate yearly progress in the current year, resulting in the designation as a school in need of improvement.
- Summarize the goals and strategies proposed in this plan to make improvements in the areas in which the school was identified.

## Submit the Plan to the School District

The local school district must approve the plan before it is sent to the USOE with the request for Title I funding. Follow the district processes for this step. The superintendent, principal, and district Title I director must sign before submission. All plans, including those that do not use the template, must include this cover page.

The plan must be presented to the local school board. The board does not need to approve the plan. This presentation will provide public information about a school's improvement status and can be used to elicit school board support for improvement efforts.

## Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is available from the USOE through the Title I department. Contact USOE Title I Specialist Ann G. White for help at any stage of the planning process.

**Plans should be sent electronically along with scanned signature pages to:**

**Ann G. White**  
**Utah State Office of Education**  
**Title I School and District Improvement**  
**E-mail: [ann.white@schools.utah.gov](mailto:ann.white@schools.utah.gov)**  
**Phone: 801-538-7827**

**In accordance with federal law, plans are due by November 15 of each year.**